

ARISTOPHANES

CLOUDS • WASPS
PEACE

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
JEFFREY HENDERSON



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ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ πατήρ
ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ υἱός
ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ Στρεψιάδου
ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ Σωκράτους,
 δύο
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α
ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ
ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ Σωκράτους
ΚΛΗΤΗΡ τοῦ προτέρου
 χρήστου
ΧΑΝΘΙΑΣ οἰκέτης
 Στρεψιάδου
ΟΙΚΕΤΑΙ Στρεψιάδου

ΧΟΡΟΣ Νεφελῶν

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

STREPSIADES

PHIDIPPIDES, his son

SLAVE of Strepsiades

PUPILS of Socrates, two

SOCRATES

BETTER ARGUMENT

WORSE ARGUMENT

FIRST CREDITOR

SECOND CREDITOR

SILENT CHARACTERS

PUPILS of Socrates

WITNESS, with First

Creditor

XANTHIAS, slave of

Strepsiades

SLAVES of Strepsiades

CHORUS of Clouds

ΝΕΦΕΛΑΙ

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ιὸν ἰού.

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὸ χρῆμα τῶν νυκτῶν ὅσον.
ἀπέραντον. οὐδέποθ' ἡμέρα γενήσεται;
καὶ μὴν πάλαι γ' ἀλεκτρύνος ἤκουσ' ἐγώ.

5 οἱ δ' οἰκέται ῥέγκουσιν. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν πρὸ τοῦ.
ἀπόλοιο δῆτ', ὦ πόλεμε, πολλῶν οὔνεκα,
ὅτ' οὐδὲ κολάσ' ἔξεστί μοι τοὺς οἰκέτας.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὁ χρηστὸς οὔτοσὶ νεανίας
ἐγείρεται τῆς νυκτός, ἀλλὰ πέρδεται

10 ἐν πέντε σισύραις ἐγκεκορδυλημένος.
ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, ῥέγκωμεν ἐγκεκαλυμμένοι.
ἀλλ' οὐ δύναμαι δείλαιος εὔδειν δακνόμενος
ὑπὸ τῆς δαπάνης καὶ τῆς φάτνης καὶ τῶν χρεῶν
διὰ τουτονὶ τὸν υἱόν. ὁ δὲ κόμην ἔχων

15 ἱππάζεται τε καὶ ξυνωρικεύεται
ὄνειροπολεῖ θ' ἵππους. ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλλυμαι
ὁρῶν ἄγουσαν τὴν σελήνην εἰκάδας·

¹ For fear they might desert to the enemy.

² I.e., more than twenty days (in the month) old.

CLOUDS

The stage building contains two doors. One represents Strepsiades' house and has a statue of Hermes outside; the other represents Socrates' Thinkery and has a large cup outside.

STREPSIADES and PHIDIPIDES lie sleeping. Strepsiades sits up restlessly.

STREPSIADES

Oh dear, oh dear! Lord Zeus, what a stretch of nighttime! Interminable. Will it never be day? I did hear a cock crow quite a while back, but the slaves are snoring. They wouldn't in the old days. Damn you, War, for my many worries, when I can't even punish my slaves!¹ And this fine young man here won't rouse himself before daybreak either, but farts away wrapped up in five woollen coverlets. All right then, let's all get under the covers and snore! No use, I can't get to sleep, poor soul; I'm being eaten alive by my bills and stable fees and debts, on account of this son of mine. He wears his hair long and rides horses and races chariots, and he even dreams about horses, while I go to pieces as I watch the moon in her twenties,² because my interest payment looms just ahead. Boy!

Enter SLAVE.

- οἱ γὰρ τόκοι χωροῦσιν. ἄπτε παῖ λύχνον
 κᾶκφερε τὸ γραμματεῖον, ἵν' ἀναγνῶ λαβῶν
 20 ὅπόσοις ὀφείλω καὶ λογίσωμαι τοὺς τόκους.
 φέρ' ἴδω, τί ὀφείλω; δώδεκα μνᾶς Πασία.
 τοῦ δώδεκα μνᾶς Πασία; τί ἐχρησάμην;
 ὅτ' ἐπριάμην τὸν κοππατίαν. οἷμοι τάλας,
 εἴθ' ἐξεκόπην πρότερον τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν λίθῳ.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- 25 Φίλων, ἀδικεῖς. ἔλαυνε τὸν σαντοῦ δρόμον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν ὃ μ' ἀπολώλεκεν
 ὄνειροπολεῖ γὰρ καὶ καθεύδων ἵππικήν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

πόσους δρόμους ἔλᾳ τὰ πολεμιστήρια;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- ἐμὲ μὲν σὺ πολλοὺς τὸν πατέρ' ἐλαύνεις δρόμους.
 30 ἀτὰρ τί χρέος ἔβα με μετὰ τὸν Πασίαν;
 τρεῖς μναὶ διφρίσκου καὶ τροχοῖν Ἀμυνία.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄπαγε τὸν ἵππον ἐξαλίσας οἴκαδε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' ὦ μέλ' ἐξήλικας ἐμέ γ' ἐκ τῶν ἐμῶν,
 ὅτε καὶ δίκας ὥφληκα χᾶτεροι τόκου
 ἐνεχυράσεσθαί φασιν.

³¹ Ἀμυνία] Ἀμεινία V fort. recte

CLOUDS

Light a lamp, and bring me my ledger book, so I can count my creditors and reckon the interest. Let's see, what do I owe? Twelve minas to Pasiás.³ What were the twelve minas to Pasiás for? What did I use it for? When I bought that branded hack. Oh me oh my! I wish I'd had my eye knocked out with a stone first.

PHIDIPPIDES

Philon, you're cheating! Drive in your own lane!

STREPSIADES

That's it, that's the bane that's done me in; even in his sleep he dreams of riding.

PHIDIPPIDES

How many laps will the war chariots be driving?

STREPSIADES

It's a good many laps you're driving me, your father. But what arrears overtook me after Pasiás? Three minas to Amynias⁴ for a small seat and a pair of wheels.

PHIDIPPIDES

Give the horse a good roll and take him home.

STREPSIADES

Actually, dear boy, it's me you've been rolling, right off my property. Now I'm on the losing side of lawsuits, and others threaten to have my goods seized in lieu of their interest.

³ No contemporary with this name is attested.

⁴ Probably the son of Pronapes of Prasíae, an envoy to Thesaly in 423/2, criticized for shirking duty (692), pretentiousness, and perhaps for being a Spartan sympathizer, cf. *Wasps* 74 etc., Cratinus 227, Eupolis 222.

ARISTOPHANES

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- 35 ἐτεόν, ὦ πάτερ,
τί δυσκολαίνεις καὶ στρέφει τὴν νύχθ' ὅλην;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

δάκνει μέ τις δήμαρχος ἐκ τῶν στρωμάτων.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔασον ὦ δαιμόνιε καταδαρθεῖν τί με.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- σὺ δ' οὖν κάθεινδε. τὰ δὲ χρέα ταῦτ' ἴσθ' ὅτι
40 εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἅπαντα τὴν σὴν τρέψεται.
φεῦ. εἴθ' ὥφελ' ἡ προμνήστρι' ἀπολέσθαι κακῶς
ἥτις με γῆμ' ἐπήρε τὴν σὴν μητέρα.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἦν ἄγροικος ἡδιστος βίος,
εὐρωτιῶν, ἀκόρητος, εἰκῇ κείμενος,
45 βρύων μελίτταις καὶ προβάτοις καὶ στεμφύλοις.
ἔπειτ' ἔγημα Μεγακλέους τοῦ Μεγακλέους
ἀδελφιδῆν ἄγροικος ὦν ἐξ ἄστεως,
σεμνήν, τρυφῶσαν, ἐγκεκοισυρωμένην.
ταύτην ὅτ' ἐγάμουν, συγκατεκλινόμην ἐγὼ
50 ὄζων τρυγός, τρασιᾶς, ἐρίων, περιουσίας,
ἡ δ' αὖ μύρου, κρόκου, καταγλωττισμάτων,
δαπάνης, λαφυγμοῦ, Κωλιάδος, Γενετυλλίδος.
οὐ μὴν ἐρῶ γ' ὥς ἀργὸς ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐσπάθα,
ἐγὼ δ' ἂν αὐτῇ θοῖμάτιον δεικνὺς τοδὶ
55 πρόφασιν ἔφασκον· ὦ γύναι, λίαν σπαθᾶς.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

ἔλαιον ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἐν τῷ λύχνῳ.

CLOUDS

PHIDIPPIDES

(*awakening*) Really, father, why do you grouse and toss all night long?

STREPSIADES

There's a bailiff in the bedclothes biting me.

PHIDIPPIDES

For heaven's sake, let me catch a little sleep.

STREPSIADES

All right then, sleep! But bear in mind, all these debts will end up on your head. Ah, I wish she'd died a terrible death, that matchmaker who talked me into marrying your mother! Mine was a very pleasant country life, moldy, unswept, aimlessly leisured, abounding in honey bees, sheep, and olive cakes. Then I married the niece of Megacles son of Megacles, I a rustic, she from town, haughty, spoiled, thoroughly Coesyriized.⁵ When I married her I climbed into bed smelling of new wine, figs, fleeces, and abundance; and she of perfume, saffron, tongue kisses, extravagance, gluttony, Colias and Genetyllis.⁶ But still, I won't say she was lazy; she used plenty of thread when she wove. I used to show her this cloak of mine as proof and say, "Woman, you go too heavy on the thread!"

SLAVE

We've got no oil in the lamp.

⁵ Megacles and his exotic mother, Coisyra, typified the aristocracy.

⁶ Colias was the name of an Attic promontory where women held festivals for Aphrodite and the Genetyllides, goddesses of procreation.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἶμοι. τί γάρ μοι τὸν πότην ἤπτες λύχνον;
 δεῦρ' ἔλθ' ἵνα κλάῃς.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

διὰ τί δῆτα κλαύσομαι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- ὅτι τῶν παχειῶν ἐνετίθεις θρυαλλίδων.
 60 μετὰ ταῦθ', ὅπως νῶν ἐγένεθ' υἱὸς οὔτοσί,
 ἐμοί τε δὴ καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ τάγαθῇ,
 περὶ τοῦνόματος δὴ ἔντεϋθεν ἐλοιδορούμεθα.
 ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἵππον προσετίθει πρὸς τοῦνομα,
 Ξάνθιππον ἢ Χαίριππον ἢ Καλλιππίδην,
 65 ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ πάππου ἑτιθέμην Φειδωνίδην.
 τέως μὲν οὖν ἐκρινόμεθ'. εἶτα τῷ χρόνῳ
 κοινῇ ξυνέβημεν καθέμεθα Φειδιππίδην.
 τοῦτον τὸν υἱὸν λαμβάνουσ' ἐκορίζετο·
 “ὅταν σὺ μέγας ὢν ἄρμ' ἐλαύνῃς πρὸς πόλιν,
 70 ὥσπερ Μεγακλῆς, ξυστίδ' ἔχων—” ἐγὼ δ' ἔφην·
 “ὅταν μὲν οὖν τὰς αἰγας ἐκ τοῦ φελλέως,
 ὥσπερ ὁ πατήρ σου, διφθέραν ἐνημμένος—”.
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπείθετο τοῖς ἐμοῖς οὐδὲν λόγοις,
 ἀλλ' ἵππερόν μου κατέχεεν τῶν χρημάτων.
 75 νῦν οὖν ὄλην τὴν νύκτα φροντίζων ὁδοῦ
 μίαν ἡῦρον ἀτραπὸν δαιμονίως ὑπερφυᾶ,
 ἣν ἦν ἀναπέισω τουτονί, σωθήσομαι.
 ἀλλ' ἐξεγεῖραι πρῶτον αὐτὸν βούλομαι.

⁶⁴ Χαίριππον V: Χάριππον n: Κάλλιππον R

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Damn it, why did you light me the thirsty lamp? Come here and take your beating.

SLAVE

Why should I get a beating, then?

STREPSIADES

Because you put in one of the thick wicks!

The SLAVE runs inside.

After that, when this son was born to us, I mean to me and my high-class wife, we started to bicker over his name. She was for adding *hippos* to the name,⁷ Xanthippus or Chaerippus or Callippides, while I was for calling him Phidonides after his grandfather.⁸ So for a while we argued, until finally we compromised and called him Phidippides. She used to pick up this boy and coo at him, "When you're grown you'll drive a chariot to the Acropolis,⁹ like Megacles, and don a saffron robe." And I would say, "No, you'll drive the goats from the Rocky Bottom, like your father, and wear a leather jacket." But he wouldn't listen to anything I said; instead he's infected my estate with the galloping trots. So now I've spent the whole night thinking of a way out, and I've found a singular shortcut, devilishly marvellous. If I can talk this boy into it, I'll be saved. But first I need to wake him up. Now how might I

⁷ Because *hippos* (horse) would sound aristocratic and because she wanted her son to become a horseman.

⁸ The grandfather's name was Phidon (cf. 134), which means "thrifty."

⁹ That is, in the Panathenaic procession.

ARISTOPHANES

πῶς δῆτ' ἂν ἤδιστ' αὐτὸν ἐπεγείραιμι; πῶς;
Φειδιππίδη, Φειδιππίδιον.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

80

τί, ὦ πάτερ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κύσον με καὶ τὴν χεῖρα δὸς τὴν δεξιάν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἰδού. τί ἐστίν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εἰπέ μοι, φιλεῖς ἐμέ;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τουτονὶ τὸν ἵππιον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μή μοι γε τοῦτον μηδαμῶς τὸν ἵππιον·
85 οὗτος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς αἵτιός μοι τῶν κακῶν.
ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἐκ τῆς καρδίας μ' ὄντως φιλεῖς,
ὦ παῖ, πιθοῦ.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τί οὖν πίθωμαι δῆτά σοι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔκτρεψον ὥς τάχιστα τοὺς σαυτοῦ τρόπους
καὶ μάθθαν' ἐλθὼν ἂν ἐγὼ παραinéσω.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

λέγε δῆ, τί κελεύεις;

CLOUDS

get him up in the nicest way? Hmm. Phidippides! Phidippidarling!

PHIDIPPIDES

What, father?

STREPSIADES

Kiss me and give me your right hand.

PHIDIPPIDES

There. What's up?

STREPSIADES

Tell me, do you love me?

PHIDIPPIDES

Yes, by Poseidon here, the Lord of Horses.

STREPSIADES

Don't give me any of your Lord of Horses! That god's responsible for my troubles. But if you really love me with all your heart, my son, do as I say.

PHIDIPPIDES

Do what as you say?

STREPSIADES

Reverse your way of life as soon as possible, and go learn what I'm going to recommend.

PHIDIPPIDES

All right, tell me what you're asking me to learn.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καί τι πείσει;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

90

πείσομαι,

νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

δεῦρό νυν ἀπόβλεπε.

ὁρᾶς τὸ θύριον τοῦτο καὶ τοῖκίδιον;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ὁρῶ. τί οὖν τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐτεόν, ὦ πάτερ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ψυχῶν σοφῶν τοῦτ' ἐστὶ φροντιστήριον.

95 ἐνταῦθ' ἐνοικοῦσ' ἄνδρες οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν
λέγοντες ἀναπείθουσιν ὥς ἔστιν πνιγεύς,
κᾶστιν περὶ ἡμᾶς οὔτος, ἡμεῖς δ' ἄνθρακες.
οὔτοι διδάσκουσ', ἀργύριον ἦν τις διδῶ,
λέγοντα νικᾶν καὶ δίκαια κᾶδικα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

εἰσὶν δὲ τίνες;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

100

οὐκ οἶδ' ἀκριβῶς τοῦνομα.
μεριμνοφροντισταὶ καλοὶ τε κἀγαθοί.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

αἰβοῖ, πονηροί γ', οἶδα. τοὺς ἀλαζόνας,
τοὺς ὠχριῶντας, τοὺς ἀνυποδήτους λέγεις,
ὧν ὁ κακοδαίμων Σωκράτης καὶ Χαιρεφῶν.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

And you will obey?

PHIDIPPIDES

I will obey, by Dionysus.

STREPSIADES

All right, look over there. Do you see that little door and that little house?

PHIDIPPIDES

I see it. So, what exactly is it, father?

STREPSIADES

That is a Thinkery for sage souls. Some gentlemen live there who argue convincingly that the sky is a barbeque lid, and that it surrounds us, and that we're the coals. These people train you, if you give them money, to win any argument whether it's right or wrong.

PHIDIPPIDES

And who are they?

STREPSIADES

I don't know the term exactly. Thoughtful cogitators, fine and genteel people.

PHIDIPPIDES

Yuk! That scum. I know them: you mean the charlatans, the pasty-faced, the unshod, like that miserable Socrates, and Chaerephon.¹⁰

¹⁰ Chaerephon, ridiculed in comedy for his thin, sallow appearance, was the long-time friend of Socrates who, according to Plato's *Apology*, asked the Delphic oracle whether anyone was wiser than Socrates.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 105 ἦ ἦ, σιώπα. μηδὲν εἶπης νήπιον.
ἀλλ' εἴ τι κήδει τῶν πατρῶων ἀλφίτων,
τούτων γενοῦ μοι, σχασάμενος τὴν ἵππικὴν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἂν μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον εἰ δοίης γέ μοι
τοὺς φασιανοὺς οὓς τρέφει Λεωγόρας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 110 ἴθ', ἀντιβολῶ σ', ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνθρώπων ἐμοί,
ἐλθὼν διδάσκου.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ τί σοι μαθήσομαι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- εἶναι παρ' αὐτοῖς φασὶν ἄμφω τῷ λόγῳ,
τὸν κρείττον', ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα.
τούτοιον τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν λόγοιιν, τὸν ἥττονα,
115 νικᾶν λέγοντά φασι τὰδικώτερα.
ἦν οὖν μάθης μοι τὸν ἄδικον τοῦτον λόγον,
ἃ νῦν ὀφείλω διὰ σέ, τούτων τῶν χρεῶν
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην οὐδ' ἂν ὀβολὸν οὐδενί.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τλαίην ἰδεῖν
120 τοὺς ἵππείας τὸ χρώμα διακεκναισμένους.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἄρα μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα τῶν γ' ἐμῶν ἔδει
οὔτ' αὐτὸς οὔθ' ὁ ζύγιος οὔθ' ὁ σαμφόρας,

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Hey, hey! Be quiet, don't say anything so childish! Now, if you care at all about your father's daily bread, cut out the riding and please become one of them.

PHIDIPPIDES

No way, by Dionysus, not even if you gave me those fancy pheasants that Leogoras¹¹ breeds.

STREPSIADES

Come on, I'm begging you, dearest of all to me, go and be trained.

PHIDIPPIDES

And what am I supposed to learn?

STREPSIADES

I'm told they have both Arguments there, the Better, whatever that may be, and the Worse. And one of these Arguments, the Worse, I'm told, can plead the unjust side of a case and win. So, if you learn this Unjust Argument for me, then I wouldn't have to pay anyone even a penny of these debts that I now owe on your account.

PHIDIPPIDES

I won't do it: I wouldn't dare face the Knights with all the tan scraped off me.

STREPSIADES

Then, by Demeter, you'll be eating none of my food, you or your yoke horse or your branded nag. I'll throw you the

¹¹ Father of the orator Andocides, wealthy and aristocratic, later denounced, though not prosecuted, in the scandal of the herms and mysteries in 415.

ARISTOPHANES

ἀλλ' ἐξελῶ σ' εἰς κόρακας ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ περιόψεται μ' ὁ θεῖος Μεγακλής
125 ἄνιππον. ἀλλ' εἴσειμι, σοῦ δ' οὐ φροντιῶ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐγὼ μέντοι πεσὼν γε κείσομαι,
ἀλλ' εὐξάμενος τοῖσιν θεοῖς διδάξομαι
αὐτὸς βαδίζων εἰς τὸ φροντιστήριον.
πῶς οὖν γέρων ὦν καπιλήσμων καὶ βραδὺς
130 λόγων ἀκριβῶν σκινδαλάμους μαθήσομαι;
ἰτητέον. τί ταῦτ' ἔχων στραγγεύομαι
ἀλλ' οὐχὶ κόπτω τὴν θύραν; παῖ, παιδίον.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

βάλλ' εἰς κόρακας. τίς ἐσθ' ὁ κόψας τὴν θύραν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

Φείδωνος υἱὸς Στρεψιάδης Κικυννόθεν.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

135 ἀμαθής γε νῆ Δί', ὅστις οὕτως σφόδρα
ἀπεριμερίμνως τὴν θύραν λελάκτικας
καὶ φροντίδ' ἐξήμβλωκας ἐξηυρημένην.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

σύγγνωθί μοι. τηλοῦ γὰρ οἰκῶ τῶν ἀγρῶν.
ἀλλ' εἰπέ μοι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦξημβλωμένον.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

140 ἀλλ' οὐ θέμις πλὴν τοῖς μαθηταῖσιν λέγειν.

CLOUDS

hell out of the house!

PHIDIPPIDES

Well, my uncle Megacles won't stand by and see me go horseless. I'm going inside and paying you no mind!

PHIDIPPIDES goes into the house.

STREPSIADES

And I won't take this fall lying down; I'll say a prayer to the gods and go to the Thinkery to be trained myself. But then again, how is an old man like me, forgetful and dense, to learn the hairsplitting of precise arguments? I've got to go. Why do I keep hanging back like this? Why not just knock on the door? Boy, boyo!

PUPIL

(within) Buzz off to blazes! *(opening the door)* Who's been pounding on the door?

STREPSIADES

Strepsiades, son of Phidon, from Cicynna.¹²

PUPIL

A dunce, damn it, the way you kick at the door so very inconsiderately, and abort a newfound idea.

STREPSIADES

Forgive me; I live way out in the country. But tell me about the matter that's been aborted.

PUPIL

It's sacrilege to tell anyone but the pupils.

¹² A small, rural, and seldom attested deme.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

λέγε νυν ἔμοι θαρρῶν· ἐγὼ γὰρ οὔτοσι
ἤκω μαθητῆς εἰς τὸ φροντιστήριον.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

λέξω, νομίσαι δὲ ταῦτα χρὴ μυστήρια.
ἀνῆρετ' ἄρτι Χαιρεφῶντα Σωκράτης
145 ψύλλαν ὁπόσους ἄλλοιτο τοὺς αὐτῆς πόδας.
δακοῦσα γὰρ τοῦ Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν ὀφρῦν
ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τὴν Σωκράτους ἀφήλατο.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς δῆτα διεμέτρησε;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

δεξιότατα.

κηρὸν διατήξας, εἶτα τὴν ψύλλαν λαβὼν
150 ἐνέβαψεν εἰς τὸν κηρὸν αὐτῆς τὼ πόδε,
κᾶτα ψυχείσῃ περιέφυσαν Περσικαί.
ταύτας ὑπολύσας ἀνεμέτρει τὸ χωρίον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τῆς λεπτότητος τῶν φρενῶν.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

τί δῆτ' ἄν, ἕτερον εἰ πύθοιο Σωκράτους
φρόντισμα;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

155 ποῖον; ἀντιβολῶ, κάτειπέ μοι.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἀνῆρετ' αὐτὸν Χαιρεφῶν ὁ Σφήττιος

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Well, don't worry about telling *me*: I've come to the Thinkery to be a pupil myself.

PUPIL

I'll tell you, but you've got to consider these matters holy secrets.¹³ Just now Socrates asked Chaerephon how many of its own feet a flea can jump, because one had bitten Chaerephon's eyebrow and jumped off onto Socrates' head.

STREPSIADES

And how did he measure it off?

PUPIL

Very cleverly. He melted some wax, then picked up the flea and dipped both its feet in the wax, and then when the wax cooled the flea had Persian slippers stuck to it. He took these off and went about measuring the distance.

STREPSIADES

Lord Zeus, what subtlety of mind!

PUPIL

Then I wonder what you'd say if you heard another idea Socrates had?

STREPSIADES

What idea? Do tell me.

PUPIL

Chaerephon of Sphettus¹⁴ asked him where he stood in

¹³ Aristophanes intends to portray the Thinkery as a private mystery cult with novel gods (252 n.).

¹⁴ Chaerephon's deme is not attested elsewhere, and Sphettus may simply be a pun on *sphex* "wasp."

ARISTOPHANES

ὁπότερα τὴν γνώμην ἔχοι, τὰς ἐμπίδας
κατὰ τὸ στόμ' ἄδειν ἢ κατὰ τοῦρροπύγιον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δῆτ' ἐκείνος εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἐμπίδος;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

160 ἔφασκεν εἶναι τοῦντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος
στενόν, διὰ λεπτοῦ δ' ὄντος αὐτοῦ τὴν πνοὴν
βία βαδίζειν εὐθὺ τοῦρροπυγίου·
ἔπειτα κοῖλον πρὸς στενῷ προσκείμενον
τὸν πρωκτὸν ἡχεῖν ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ πνεύματος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

165 σάλπιγξ ὁ πρωκτός ἐστιν ἄρα τῶν ἐμπίδων.
ὦ τρισμακάριος τοῦ διεντερεύματος.
ἦ ραδίως φεύγων ἂν ἀποφύγοι δίκην
ὅστις δίοιδε τοῦντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

πρώην δέ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφηρέθη
ὑπ' ἀσκαλαβώτου.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

170 τίνα τρόπον; κάτειπέ μοι.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ζητοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὁδοὺς
καὶ τὰς περιφοράς, εἴτ' ἄνω κεχηνότος
ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἥσθην γαλεώτη καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.

CLOUDS

regard to the question, whether gnats hum via the mouth or via the rump.

STREPSIADES

So what did Socrates say about the gnat?

PUPIL

He said that the gnat's gut is narrow, and that the air travels violently through this small space on its way to the rump, and then the arsehole, being an orifice attached to a narrow tube, resounds from the force of the wind.

STREPSIADES

So the gnat's arsehole turns out to be a bugle. Thrice happy man, for such penetrating enterology! As a defendant he'd certainly be able to escape conviction, since he knows the gnat's gut inside out.

PUPIL

Yes, and just recently he had a great idea snatched away by a lizard.

STREPSIADES

How was that? Tell me.

PUPIL

He was investigating the moon's paths and revolutions, and as he was looking upwards with his mouth open, from the roof in darkness a gecko shat on him.

STREPSIADES

I like that, a gecko shitting on Socrates!

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

175 ἐχθὲς δέ γ' ἡμῖν δείπνον οὐκ ἦν ἐσπέρας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εἰέν. τί οὖν πρὸς τάλφιτ' ἐπαλαμήσατο;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

κατὰ τῆς τραπέζης καταπάσας λεπτήν τέφραν,
κάμψας ὀβελίσκον, εἶτα διαβήτην λαβὼν
ἐκ τῆς παλαίστρας θοῖμάτιον ὑφείλετο.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

180 τί δῆτ' ἐκείνον τὸν Θαλῆν θαυμάζομεν;
ἄνοιγ' ἄνοιγ' ἀνύσας τὸ φροντιστήριον
καὶ δείξον ὥς τάχιστα μοι τὸν Σωκράτη.
μαθητιῶ γάρ. ἀλλ' ἄνοιγε τὴν θύραν.
ὦ Ἡράκλεις, ταυτὶ ποδαπὰ τὰ θηρία;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

185 τί ἐθαύμασας; τῷ σοι δοκοῦσιν εἰκέναι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοῖς ἐκ Πύλου ληφθεῖσι, τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς.
ἀτὰρ τί ποτ' εἰς τὴν γῆν βλέπουσιν οὔτοί;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ζητοῦσιν οὔτοι τὰ κατὰ γῆς.

¹⁵ At first Socrates seems to have been performing a scientific demonstration, but then turns out to have robbed a passive homosexual of his clothing; the joke turns on the double meaning of *diabetes* "compass" and "one who spreads his legs."

CLOUDS

PUPIL

Yes, and last night we had no dinner to eat.

STREPSIADES

Aha. So how did he finagle your eats?

PUPIL

Over the table he sprinkled a fine layer of ash and bent a skewer, then he picked up a faggot from the wrestling school and swiped his jacket.¹⁵

STREPSIADES

Then why do we marvel at the great Thales?¹⁶ Hurry and open up the Thinkery, and show me this Socrates as soon as possible. I yearn to learn! Come on, open up the door!

The eccyclema is rolled out, revealing other Pupils and an assortment of devices.

Heracles, what sort of critters are these?

PUPIL

Why are you taken aback? What do they look like to you?

STREPSIADES

Like the Spartan prisoners from Pylos.¹⁷ But those there, why on earth are they peering at the ground?

PUPIL

They're investigating what's beneath the ground.

¹⁶ The early sixth-century founder of the Milesian school of philosophy.

¹⁷ 292 Spartan soldiers captured in the late summer of 425 and imprisoned at Athens since then (Thucydides 4.38-41).

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

βολβοὺς ἄρα

ζητοῦσι. μή νυν τοῦτό γ' ἔτι φροντίζετε·
 190 ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδ' ἵν' εἰσὶ μεγάλοι καὶ καλοί.
 τί γὰρ οἶδε δρώσιν οἱ σφόδρ' ἐγκεκυφότες;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

οὔτοι δ' ἐρεβοδιφῶσιν ὑπὸ τὸν Τάρταρον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δῆθ' ὁ πρωκτὸς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπει;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς καθ' αὐτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται.
 195 ἀλλ' εἴσιθ', ἵνα μὴ 'κείνος ὑμῖν ἐπιτύχη.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μήπω γε μήπω γ', ἀλλ' ἐπιμεινάντων, ἵνα
 αὐτοῖσι κοινώσω τιπραγμάτιον ἐμόν.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχ οἷόν τ' αὐτοῖσι πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα
 ἔξω διατρίβειν πολὺν ἄγαν ἐστὶν χρόνον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

200 πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, τί γὰρ τάδ' ἐστίν; εἰπέ μοι.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἀστρονομία μὲν αὕτηί.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τουτὶ δὲ τί;

195 ὑμῖν ΣR: ἡμῖν a

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Oh, it's bulbs they're trying to find! (*to the other pupils*)
You can stop worrying about that; I know where there are
nice big ones. (*to Pupil*) And these here, what are they
doing all bent over?

PUPIL

They're scrutinizing the murkiness below Tartarus.

STREPSIADES

Then why the arsehole peering at the sky?

PUPIL

Learning astronomy on its own. (*to the Pupils*) Well, inside
with you; he mustn't find you out here.

STREPSIADES

Not yet, not yet! Let them stay awhile; I want to share with
them a small problem of my own.

PUPIL

No, they're not at liberty to spend very much time outside
in the open air.

The other Pupils go inside.

STREPSIADES

(*pointing at the instruments*) What in god's name are these,
then? Tell me.

PUPIL

This one here is for astronomy.

STREPSIADES

And this one?

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

γεωμετρία.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοῦτ' οὖν τί ἐστὶ χρήσιμον;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

γῆν ἀναμετρεῖσθαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πότερα τὴν κληρουχικήν;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν σύμπασαν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀστείον λέγεις·

205 τὸ γὰρ σόφισμα δημοτικὸν καὶ χρήσιμον.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὕτη δέ σοι γῆς περίοδος πάσης. ὁρᾷς;
αἶδε μὲν Ἀθῆναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί σὺ λέγεις; οὐ πείθομαι,
ἐπεὶ δικαστὰς οὐχ ὁρῶ καθημένους.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ὥς τοῦτ' ἀληθῶς Ἀττικὸν τὸ χωρίον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

210 καὶ ποῦ Κικυννῆς εἰσὶν, οὐμοὶ δημόται;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἐνταῦθ' ἔνεισιν. ἡ δέ γ' Εὐβοί', ὥς ὁρᾷς,
ἡδὲ παρατέταται μακρὰ πόρρω πάνν.

CLOUDS

PUPIL

Geometry.

STREPSIADES

So what's that good for?

PUPIL

For measuring land.

STREPSIADES

You mean land for settlers?

PUPIL

No, land in general.

STREPSIADES

Talk about sophisticated! That device is democratic, and useful too.

PUPIL

And look, this is a map of the entire world. See? That's Athens right here.

STREPSIADES

What do you mean? I don't believe it; I don't see any juries in session.

PUPIL

Anyway, this really is the territory of Attica.

STREPSIADES

Then where are the Cicynnians, my fellow demesmen?

PUPIL

They're over here. And Euboea, as you can see, is laid out here, over a very long stretch.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἶδ' ὑπὸ γὰρ ἡμῶν παρετάθη καὶ Περικλέους.
ἀλλ' ἢ Λακεδαίμων ποῦ ἔστιν;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ὅπου ἔστιν; αὐτήι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

215 ὥς ἐγγὺς ἡμῶν. τοῦτο μεταφροντίζετε,
ταύτην ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀπαγαγεῖν πόρρω πάνν.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχ οἶόν τε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νῆ Δί', οἰμώξεσθ' ἄρα.

φέρει τίς γὰρ οὔτος οὐπὶ τῆς κρεμάθρας ἀνὴρ;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὐτός.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τίς αὐτός;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

Σωκράτης.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Σωκράτης.

220 ἴθ' οὔτος ἀναβόησον αὐτόν μοι μέγα.

215 μεταφροντίζετε Bentley: μέγα φροντίζετε S: πάνν
φροντίζετε a

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

I know; we laid it out ourselves, with Pericles.¹⁸ But where's Sparta?

PUPIL

Let me see; right here.

STREPSIADES

So close to us! Do change your minds and move it very far away from us.

PUPIL

That's impossible.

STREPSIADES

By Zeus, you'll be sorry if you don't!

SOCRATES appears overhead, suspended in a basket.

Hey, who's that man in the basket?¹⁹

PUPIL

Himself.

STREPSIADES

Whose self?

PUPIL

Socrates.

STREPSIADES

Ah, Socrates! Come on, you, call up to him for me, loudly!

¹⁸ Pericles had invaded Euboea to suppress a revolt in 446 (Thucydides 1.114).

¹⁹ In Plato's *Apology* 19b Socrates recalls this image as having contributed to popular prejudice against him.

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σὺ κάλεσον· οὐ γάρ μοι σχολή.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Σώκρατες.

ὦ Σωκρατίδιον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τί με καλεῖς, ὦ ἡμέρε;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι δρᾶς, ἀντιβολῶ, κάτειπέ μοι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

225 ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ ταρροῦ τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπερφρονεῖς,
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, εἴπερ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ ἂν ποτε

ἐξῆϋρον ὀρθῶς τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα
εἰ μὴ κρεμάσας τὸ νόημα καὶ τὴν φροντίδα,
230 λεπτὴν καταμείζας εἰς τὸν ὅμοιον ἀέρα.
εἰ δ' ὦν χαμαὶ τᾶν κατῶθεν ἐσκόπουν,
οὐκ ἂν ποθ' ἡϋρον· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἡ γῆ βία
ἔλκει πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν ἱκμάδα τῆς φροντίδος.
πάσχει δὲ ταὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ κάρδαμα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

235 πῶς φῆς;
ἡ φροντίς ἔλκει τὴν ἱκμάδ' εἰς τὰ κάρδαμα;

CLOUDS

PUPIL

No, you call him yourself; I haven't got the time.

Exit PUPIL.

STREPSIADES

Oh Socrates! Socratikins!

SOCRATES

Why do you summon me, o creature of a day?

STREPSIADES

Well, first of all tell me, please, what you're up to.

SOCRATES

I tread the air and scrutinize the sun.

STREPSIADES

So you look down on the gods from a basket? Why not do it from the ground, if that's what you're doing?

SOCRATES

Why, for accurate discoveries about meteorological phenomena I had to suspend my mind, to commingle my rarefied thought with its kindred air. If I had been on the ground and from down there contemplated what's up here, I would have made no discoveries at all: the earth, you see, simply must forcibly draw to itself the moisture of thought. The very same thing happens to watercress.

STREPSIADES

How's that? The mind draws moisture into watercress?

²²⁶ ὑπερφρ-] περιφρ- V

²³⁵ πωS III: τί a

ARISTOPHANES

ἴθι νυν κατάβηθ', ὦ Σωκρατίδιον, ὥς ἐμέ,
ἵνα με διδάξης ὧνπερ ἔνεκ' ἐλήλυθα.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἦλθες δὲ κατὰ τί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

βουλόμενος μαθεῖν λέγειν·
240 ὑπὸ γὰρ τόκων χρήστων τε δυσκολωτάτων
ἄγομαι, φέρομαι, τὰ χρήματ' ἐνεχυράζομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

πόθεν δ' ὑπόχρεως σαυτὸν ἔλαθες γενόμενος;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νόσος μ' ἐπέτρωψεν ἵππικῇ, δεινὴ φαγεῖν.
ἀλλὰ με δίδαξον τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν σοῖν λόγοιν,
245 τὸν μηδὲν ἀποδιδόντα. μισθὸν δ' ὄντιν' ἄν
πράττη μ', ὁμοῦμαί σοι καταθήσειν τοὺς θεούς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ποίους θεοὺς ὁμεί σύ; πρῶτον γὰρ θεοὶ
ἡμῖν νόμισμ' οὐκ ἔστι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τῷ γὰρ ὄμνυτε;
σιδαρέοισιν, ὥσπερ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

250 βούλει τὰ θεῖα πράγματ' εἰδέναι σαφῶς
ἅττ' ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νῆ Δί', εἴπερ ἐστί γε.

CLOUDS

Come down here to me, Socratikins, so you can teach me what I've come to learn.

SOCRATES

(descending to the ground) And why have you come?

STREPSIADES

Anxious to learn public speaking. You see, I'm being harried and plundered by debts and cantankerous creditors, and having my property foreclosed.

SOCRATES

And how did you become indebted without noticing it?

STREPSIADES

A galloping consumption has destroyed me with its terrible voracity. Now: teach me one of your two Arguments, the one that repays no debts. Whatever fee you may charge, I'll swear to you by the gods to pay in cash.

SOCRATES

What do you mean, you'll swear by the gods? First of all, gods aren't legal tender here.

STREPSIADES

So, what do you swear by? Iron coins, as in Byzantium?

SOCRATES

Would you like to know the truth about matters divine, what they really are?

STREPSIADES

I certainly would, if it's actually possible.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ συγγενέσθαι ταῖς Νεφέλαισιν εἰς λόγους,
ταῖς ἡμετέραισι δαίμοσιν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μάλιστα γε.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

κάθιζε τοίνυν ἐπὶ τὸν ἱερὸν σκίμποδα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἰδού, κάθημαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

255 τουτονὶ τοίνυν λαβὲ
τὸν στέφανον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐπὶ τί στέφανον; οἶμοι, Σώκρατες,
ὥσπερ με τὸν Ἀθάμανθ' ὅπως μὴ θύσετε.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα πάντα τοὺς τελουμένους
ἡμεῖς ποιούμεν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εἶτα δὴ τί κερδανῶ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

260 λέγειν γενήσκει τρῖμμα, κρόταλον, παιπάλῃ.
ἀλλ' ἔχ' ἀτρεμεί.

²⁵⁸ ταῦτα πάντα RVNΘ: πάντα ταῦτα EK: πάντας ταῦτα
Reiske

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

And to have converse with the Clouds, our own deities?²⁰

STREPSIADES

Yes, very much.

SOCRATES

Then sit down upon the sacred sofa.

STREPSIADES

All right, I'm sitting.

SOCRATES

Now take hold of this, the wreath.

STREPSIADES

What's the wreath for? Dear me, Socrates, mind you don't sacrifice me, like Athamas!²¹

SOCRATES

I won't. All this is our procedure for initiands.

STREPSIADES

And what's in it for me?

SOCRATES

At speaking you'll become a smoothie, a castanet, the flower of orators. Now don't move. (*Socrates sprinkles flour on StrepsiaDES*)

²⁰ Lines 252-274 parody the initiation rites and prayers characteristic of private mystery cults, e.g. those of the Orphics and Pythagoreans.

²¹ In Sophocles' lost play *Athamas* the hero sits, wreathed, on Zeus' altar, about to be sacrificed for wronging his wife Nephele ("cloud").

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ ψεύσει γέ με·
καταπαττόμενος γὰρ παιπάλη γενήσομαι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εὐφημεῖν χρὴ τὸν πρεσβύτεν καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς ἐπακού-
ειν.

ὦ δέσποτ' ἄναξ, ἀμέτρητ' Ἀήρ, ὅς ἔχεις τὴν γῆν
μετέωρον,

265 λαμπρός τ' Αἰθήρ, σεμναί τε θεαὶ Νεφέλαι βροντη-
σικέραννοι,
ἄρθητε, φάνητ', ὦ δέσποιναι, τῷ φροντιστῇ μετέωροι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μήπω, μήπω γε, πρὶν ἂν τουτὶ πτύξωμαι, μὴ κατα-
βρεχθῶ.

τὸ δὲ μηδὲ κυνῆν οἴκοθεν ἐλθεῖν ἐμὲ τὸν κακοδαί-
μον' ἔχοντα.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἔλθετε δῆτ', ὦ πολυτίμητοι Νεφέλαι, τῷδ' εἰς ἐπίδει-
ξιν·

270 εἴτ' ἐπ' Ὀλύμπου κορυφαῖς ἱεραῖς χιονοβλήτοισι
κάθησθε,
εἴτ' Ὠκεανοῦ πατρὸς ἐν κήποις ἱερὸν χορὸν ἴστατε
Νύμφαις,
εἴτ' ἄρα Νείλου προχοαῖς ὑδάτων χρυσέαις ἀρύ-
τεσθε πρόχοισιν,
ἢ Μαιῶτιν λίμνην ἔχετ' ἢ σκόπελον νιφόεντα
Μίμαντος·

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

By Zeus, you won't trick me! You mean getting dredged is how I'll become flour?

SOCRATES

The old man must keep silence and listen to the prayer. O Lord and Master, measureless Air, who hold the earth aloft, and you, shining Empyrean, and ye Clouds, awesome goddesses of thunder and lightning, arise, appear aloft, o Mistresses, to the thinker!

STREPSIADES

(*covering himself with his cloak*) Not yet, not until I get this over me, so I don't get soaked. To think I left home, poor fool, without even a cap!

SOCRATES

Come then, illustrious Clouds, in an exhibition for this man, whether you now sit on Olympus' holy snow-struck peaks, or start up a holy dance for the Nymphs in father Ocean's gardens, or whether again at the Nile's mouths you scoop its waters in golden pitchers, or inhabit Lake Maeotis or the snowy steeps of Mimas: hear my prayer,

ὑπακούσατε δεξάμεναι θυσίαν καὶ τοῖς ἱεροῖσι
χαρεῖσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) ἀέναοι Νεφέλαι,
ἀρθῶμεν φανεραὶ δροσερὰν φύσιν εὐάγητον
πατρὸς ἀπ' Ὀκεανοῦ βαρναχέος
ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφὰς ἔπι
280 δενδροκόμους, ἵνα
τηλεφανεῖς σκοπιάς ἀφορώμεθα
καρπούς τ' ἀρδομέναν ἱερὰν χθόνα
καὶ ποταμῶν ζαθέων κελαδήματα
καὶ πόντον κελάδοντα βαρύβρομον·
285 ὄμμα γὰρ αἰθέρος ἀκάματον σελαγεῖται
μαρμαρέαισιν ἀνγαῖς.
ἀλλ' ἀποσεισάμεναι νέφος ὄμβριον
ἀθανάτας ἰδέας ἐπιδώμεθα
290 τηλεσκόπῳ ὄμματι γαῖαν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὦ μέγα σεμναὶ Νεφέλαι, φανερώς ἤκούσατέ μου
καλέσαντος.
ἦσθον φωνῆς ἄμα καὶ βροντῆς μυκησαμένης
θεοσέπτου;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ σέβομαί γ', ὦ πολυτίμητοι, καὶ βούλομαι ἀν-
αποπαρδεῖν
πρὸς τὰς βροντάς· οὕτως αὐτὰς τετραμαίνω καὶ πε-
φόβημαι.

CLOUDS

accept my sacrifice and enjoy these holy rites.

CHORUS

(*from afar*)

Clouds everlasting,
let us arise, revealing our dewy bright form,
from deep roaring father Ocean
onto high mountain peaks
with tresses of trees, whence
to behold heights of distant vantage,
and holy earth whose crops we water,
and divine rivers' rushing,
and the sea crashing with deep thunder.
For heaven's tireless eye is ablaze
with gleaming rays.
So let us shake off the rainy haze
from our deathless shape and survey
the land, with telescopic eye.

SOCRATES

Most stately Clouds, you have clearly heard my summons.
(*to Strepsiades*) Did you mark their voice and, in concert,
the bellowing thunder that prompts holy reverence?

STREPSIADES

I do revere you, illustrious ones, and I'm ready to answer
those thunderclaps with a fart; that's how much I fear and

295 κεί θέμις ἐστίν, νυνί γ' ἤδη, κεί μὴ θέμις ἐστί, χε-
σείω.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ μὴ σκώψει μηδὲ ποιήσεις ἅπερ οἱ τρυγο-
δαίμονες οὔτοι,
ἀλλ' εὐφήμει· μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν κινεῖται σμήνος
ᾠοιδαῖς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) παρθένοι ὀμβροφόροι,
300 ἔλθωμεν λιπαρὰν χθόνα Παλλάδος, εὐανδρον γᾶν
Κέκροπος ὀψόμεναι πολυήρατον·
οὐ σέβας ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα
μυστοδόκος δόμος
ἐν τελεταῖς ἀγίαις ἀναδείκνυται·
305 οὐρανίοις τε θεοῖς δωρήματα,
ναοί θ' ὑπερεφεῖς καὶ ἀγάλματα,
καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἱερώταται
εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλῖαι τε
310 παντοδαπαῖσιν ὥραις,
ἥρι τ' ἐπερχομένῳ Βρομία χάρις
εὐκελάδων τε χορῶν ἐρεθίσματα
καὶ μούσα βαρύβρομος αὐλῶν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πρὸς τοῦ Διός, ἀντιβολῶ σε, φράσον, τίνες εἴς', ὦ
Σώκρατες, αὔται
315 αἱ φθεγξάμεναι τοῦτο τὸ σεμνόν; μὼν ἡρῶναί τινές
εἰσιν;

CLOUDS

tremble at them. And right now, if it's sanctioned, and even if it isn't, I need to shit!

SOCRATES

Don't be scurrilous and act like those hapless comedians! Now keep silence, for a great swarm of gods is on the move, in song.

CHORUS

(closer)

Rainbearing maidens,
let us visit the gleaming land of Pallas, to see the
ravishing country
of Cecrops with its fine men,
where ineffable rites are celebrated, where
the temple that receives initiates
is thrown open during the pure mystic festival;²²
and where there are offerings to the heavenly host,
temples with lofty roofs and statues,
most holy processions for the Blessed Ones,
well-garlanded victims for the gods, and feasts
in all seasons;
and with spring comes the grace of Bromius,²³
the rivalry of melodious choruses
and the deep toned music of pipes.

STREPSIADES

By Zeus, I beg you, tell me who they are, Socrates, these females who intoned that awesome song? They're not lady heroes of some sort, are they?

²² The Eleusinian Mysteries.

²³ "The Noisy," a poetic title for Dionysus; the festival envisioned here is the City Dionysia with its dramas.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἤκιστ', ἀλλ' οὐράνιαι Νεφέλαι, μεγάλαι θεαὶ ἀνδρά-
 σιν ἀργοῖς,
 αἵπερ γνώμην καὶ διάλεξιν καὶ νοῦν ἡμῖν παρέχου-
 σιν
 καὶ τερατεῖαν καὶ περίλεξιν καὶ κροῦσιν καὶ κατὰ-
 ληψιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἀκούσας' αὐτῶν τὸ φθέγμ' ἡ ψυχὴ μου
 πεπότῃται
 320 καὶ λεπτολογεῖν ἤδη ζητεῖ καὶ περὶ καπνοῦ στενο-
 λεσχεῖν
 καὶ γνωμιδίῳ γνώμην νύξας' ἐτέρῳ λόγῳ ἀντι-
 λογῆσαι·
 ὥστ' εἴ πως ἐστίν, ἰδεῖν αὐτὰς ἤδη φανερώς ἐπι-
 θυμῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

βλέπε νυν δευρὶ πρὸς τὴν Πάρνηθ'· ἤδη γὰρ ὁρῶ
 κατιούσας
 ἡσυχῇ αὐτάς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φέρε ποῦ; δείξον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

χωροῦσ' αὖται πάνυ πολλαὶ
 διὰ τῶν κοίλων καὶ τῶν δασέων, αὖται πλάγαι.

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

Not at all; they're heavenly Clouds, great goddesses for idle gentlemen, who provide us with judgment and dialectic and intelligence, fantasy and circumlocution and verbal thrust and parry.

STREPSIADES

So that's why my soul has taken flight at the sound of their voice, and now seeks to split hairs, prattle narrowly about smoke, and meet argument with counterargument, puncturing a point with a pointlet. So if at all possible, I want to see them now in person.

SOCRATES

Then look over here, toward Mount Parnes, because now I see them quietly descending.

STREPSIADES

Where? Come on, show me!

The CHORUS files along the wings toward the orchestra.

SOCRATES

They're on the march, quite a lot of them, through the hollows and thickets—there, to the side.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

325

τί τὸ χρήμα;

ὥς οὐ καθορῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

παρὰ τὴν εἴσοδον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἤδη νυνὶ μόλις οὕτως.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

νῦν γέ τοι ἤδη καθορᾶς αὐτάς, εἰ μὴ λημᾶς
κολοκύνταις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νῆ Δί' ἔγωγ'. ὦ πολυτίμητοι· πάντα γὰρ ἤδη
κατέχουσιν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ταύτας μέντοι σὺ θεὰς οὔσας οὐκ ἤδησθ' οὐδ'
ἐνόμιζες;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

330 μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὁμίχλην καὶ δρόσον αὐτὰς ἡγούμην
καὶ καπνὸν εἶναι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δί' οἶσθ' ὅτιν' πλείστους αὐταὶ βόσκουσι
σοφιστάς,

Θουριομάντεις, ἰατροτέχνας, σφραγιδονυχαργοκο-
μήτας·

κυκλίων τε χορῶν ἄσματοκάμπτας, ἄνδρας μετεωρο-
φένακας,

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

What's going on? I don't see them.

SOCRATES

In the wings!

STREPSIADES

Yes, now I can almost see them.

SOCRATES

By now you must see them, unless you've got styes like pumpkins!

STREPSIADES

Yes, now I see them. Heaven be praised, they're permeating everything!

SOCRATES

And you didn't realize that they're goddesses, or believe it?

STREPSIADES

God no; I thought they were mist and dew and smoke.

SOCRATES

You didn't because you're unaware that they nourish a great many sophists, diviners from Thurii,²⁴ medical experts, long-haired idlers with onyx signet rings, and tune bending composers of dithyrambic choruses, men of highflown pretension, whom they maintain as do-nothings,

²⁴ The Athenian colony in southern Italy founded in 444/3. Aristophanes probably alludes to the seer Lampon, appointed by Pericles to conduct the official foundation ceremonies and still a prominent figure at Athens (Thucydides 5.19, 24).

³²⁶ *παρὰ] πρὸς* VEP^cN

³²⁹ *ῥῳδῆσθ'* Hirschig: *ῥῳδεις* a

οὐδὲν δρῶντας βόσκουσ' ἀργούς, ὅτι ταύτας μουσο-
ποιοῦσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 335 ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποιοῦν "ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταίγλαν
δαΐιον ὀρμάν",
"πλοκάμους θ' ἑκατογκεφάλα Τυφῶ", "πρημαινού-
σας τε θυέλλας",
εἴτ' "ἀερίας διεράς", "γαμψούς τ' οἰωνοὺς ἀερονηχεῖς",
"ὄμβρους θ' ὑδάτων δροσερᾶν νεφελᾶν". εἴτ' αὐτ'
αὐτῶν κατέπινον
κεστρᾶν τεμάχη μεγαλᾶν ἀγαθᾶν κρέα τ' ὀρνίθεια
κιχηλᾶν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

διὰ μέντοι τάσδ'. οὐχὶ δικαίως;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 340 λέξον δὴ μοι, τί παθοῦσαι,
εἵπερ νεφέλαι γ' εἰσὶν ἀληθῶς, θνηταῖς εἷξασι γυ-
ναιξίν;
οὐ γὰρ ἐκεῖναί γ' εἰσὶ τοιαῦται.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

φέρε, ποῖαι γάρ τινές εἰσιν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδα σαφῶς· εἷξασιν δ' οὖν ἐρίοισιν πεπταμέ-
νοισιν,
κούχιν γυναιξίν, μὰ Δί', οὐδ' ὅτιοῦν· αὗται δὲ ρίνας
ἔχουσιν.

CLOUDS

because they compose music about these Clouds.²⁵

STREPSIADES

So that's why they compose verses like "dire downdraft of humid clouds zigzaggedly braceleted," and "locks of hundred-headed Typhus," and "blasting squalls," and then "airy scudders crooked of talon, birds swimming on high," and "rain of waters from dewy clouds." Then, as their reward, they get to gulp down nice big mullet fillets and avian thrush cutlets!²⁶

SOCRATES

Certainly, thanks to these Clouds. Isn't that fair?

STREPSIADES

So tell me, if these really are Clouds, how is it that they look like mortal women? (*pointing skyward*) Because those clouds aren't like that.

SOCRATES

Well, what do they look like?

STREPSIADES

I don't know exactly, but they look like fleeces spread out, not like women, no, surely not in any way. And these Clouds have noses!

²⁵ Comic poets ridiculed dithyrambists for verbosity and for overworking metaphors from flight; cf. *Peace* 828 ff., *Birds* 1372 ff.

²⁶ I.e., at the banquet provided by the producer of a dithyrambic chorus.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀπόκριναί νυν ἄττ' ἂν ἔρωμαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

345

λέγε νυν ταχέως ὅτι βούλει.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἤδη ποτ' ἀναβλέψας εἶδες νεφέλην κενταύρῳ ὁμοίαν
ἣ παρδάλει ἣ λύκῳ ἣ ταύρῳ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ Δί' ἔγωγ'. εἶτα τί τοῦτο;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

γίνονται πάνθ' ὅτι βούλονται· κᾶτ' ἦν μὲν ἴδωσι
κομήτην

ἄγριόν τινα τῶν λασίων τούτων, οἷόνπερ τὸν Ξενο-
φάντου,

350

σκώπτουσαι τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ κενταύροις ἤκασαν
αὐτάς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί γὰρ ἦν ἄρπαγα τῶν δημοσίων κατίδωσι Σίμωνα,
τί δρῶσιν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀποφαίνουσαι τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ λύκοι ἐξαίφνης
ἐγένοντο.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ταῦτ' ἄρα, ταῦτα Κλεώνυμον αὐται τὸν ρύψασπιν
χθρὲς ἰδοῦσαι,

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

Now answer some questions for me.

STREPSIADES

Ask away, whatever you like.

SOCRATES

Have you ever looked up and seen a cloud resembling a centaur, or a leopard, or a wolf, or a bull?

STREPSIADES

Certainly I have. So what?

SOCRATES

Clouds turn into anything they want. Thus, if they see a savage with long hair, one of these furry types, like the son of Xenophantus,²⁷ they mock his obsession by making themselves look like centaurs.

STREPSIADES

And what if they look down and see a predator of public funds like Simon,²⁸ what do they do?

SOCRATES

To expose his nature they immediately turn into wolves.

STREPSIADES

That must be why, when the other day they caught sight of

²⁷ Identified in the scholia as Hieronymus, a tragic and dithyrambic poet. His "obsession" would be pederasty.

²⁸ Called an embezzler also by Eupolis (fr. 235), and a perjurer at 399 below.

ARISTOPHANES

ὅτι δειλότατον τοῦτον ἑώρων, ἔλαφοι διὰ τοῦτ'
ἐγένοντο.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

355 καὶ νῦν γ' ὅτι Κλεισθένη εἶδον, ὁρᾶς, διὰ τοῦτ'
ἐγένοντο γυναῖκες.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

χαίρετε τοῖνυν, ὦ δέσποιναι καὶ νῦν, εἴπερ τινὲ καλλῶ,
οὐρανομήκη ῥήξατε κάμοι φωνήν, ὦ παμβασίλειαι.

ΔΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

χαῖρ', ὦ πρεσβῦτα παλαιογενές, θηρατὰ λόγων
φιλομούσων.

σύ τε, λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἱερεῦ, φράζε πρὸς ἡμᾶς
ὅτι χρήζεις·

360 οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλῳ γ' ὑπακούσαιομεν τῶν νῦν μετεωρο-
σοφιστῶν

πλὴν ἢ Προδίκῳ, τῷ μὲν σοφίας καὶ γνώμης
οὐνεκα, σοὶ δὲ

ὅτι βρενθύει τ' ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς καὶ τῷ φθαλμῷ
παραβάλλεις

κάνυπόδητος κακὰ πόλλ' ἀνέχει κάφ' ἡμῖν σεμνο-
προσωπεῖς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Γῆ, τοῦ φθέγματος, ὡς ἱερὸν καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ
τερατῶδες.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

365 αὐται γάρ τοι μόναι εἰσὶ θεαί, τᾶλλα δὲ πάντ' ἐστὶ
φλύαρος.

CLOUDS

Cleonymus the shield thrower, they knew him for a great coward, and turned into deer!

SOCRATES

And today, because they've seen Cleisthenes—see him?—that's why they've turned into women!²⁹

STREPSIADES

Then hail, Mistresses! And now, almighty Queens, if you've ever so favored another man, break forth for me too a sound that spans the sky!

CHORUS LEADER

Hail, oldster born long ago, stalker of erudite arguments, and you too, priest of subtlest hogwash, tell us what you desire; for we would pay no attention to any other contemporary sophist of celestial studies except for Prodicus,³⁰ for his wisdom and intelligence, and you, because you strut like a popinjay through the streets and cast your eyes sideways and, unshod, endure many woes and wear a haughty expression for our sake.

STREPSIADES

Mother Earth, what a voice! How holy and august and marvelous!

SOCRATES

That's because they are the only true goddesses; all the rest are rubbish.

²⁹ Cleonymus was an obese politician who probably lost his shield in the Athenian retreat at Delium the previous year (Thucydides 4.96). Cleisthenes was a beardless man frequently ridiculed for effeminacy.

³⁰ Prodicus of Ceos, a contemporary of Socrates, pursued interests ranging from natural science to semantics and ethics, and enjoyed a reputation comparable to Einstein's today.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὁ Ζεὺς δ' ὑμῖν, φέρε, πρὸς τῆς Γῆς, Οὐλύμπιος οὐ
θεὸς ἐστίν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ποῖος Ζεὺς; οὐ μὴ ληρήσεις. οὐδ' ἐστὶ Ζεὺς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί λέγεις σύ;

ἀλλὰ τίς ὕει; τουτὶ γὰρ ἔμοιγ' ἀπόφηναι πρῶτον
ἀπάντων.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

αὐται δὴπον· μεγάλοις δέ σ' ἐγὼ σημείοις αὐτὸ
διδάξω.

370 φέρε, ποῦ γὰρ πώποτ' ἄνευ νεφελῶν ὕοντ' ἤδη τε-
θέασαι;
καίτοι χρῆν αἰθρίας ὕειν αὐτόν, ταύτας δ'
ἀποδημεῖν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, τοῦτό γε τοι τῷ νυνὶ λόγῳ εἶ
προσέφυσας.

καίτοι πρότερον τὸν Δί' ἀληθῶς ὤμην διὰ κοσκίνου
οὔρεῖν.

ἀλλ' ὅστις ὁ βροντῶν ἐστὶ φράσον, τοῦθ' ὃ με
ποιεῖ τετραμαίνειν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

αὐται βροντῶσι κυλινδόμεναι.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Come now, by Earth, doesn't Olympian Zeus count as a god with you people?

SOCRATES

What do you mean, Zeus? Do stop driveling. Zeus doesn't even exist!

STREPSIADES

What are you talking about? Then who makes it rain? Answer me that one, first of all.

SOCRATES

These do, of course! And I'll teach you how, with grand proofs. Now then: where have you ever yet seen rain without Clouds? Though according to you, Zeus should make rain himself on a clear day, when the Clouds are out of town.

STREPSIADES

By Apollo, you've nicely spliced that point with what you were saying a moment ago. And imagine, before now I thought that rain is Zeus pissing through a sieve! But tell me who does the thundering that makes me tremble.

SOCRATES

These do the thundering, by rolling around.

375

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τῷ τρόπῳ, ὦ πάντα σὺ τολμῶν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὅταν ἐμπλησθῶσ' ὕδατος πολλοῦ κἀναγκασθῶσι
 φέρεσθαι
 κατακριμνάμεναι πλήρεις ὄμβρου δι' ἀνάγκην, εἶτα
 βαρεῖαι
 εἰς ἀλλήλας ἐπίπτουσai ῥήγνυνται καὶ
 παταγοῦσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὁ δ' ἀναγκάζων ἐστὶ τίς αὐτάς—οὐχ ὁ Ζεὺς;
 —ὥστε φέρεσθαι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἦκιστ', ἀλλ' αἰθέριος δῖνος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

380

Δῖνος; τουτί μ' ἐλελήθει,

ὁ Ζεὺς οὐκ ὦν, ἀλλ' ἀντ' αὐτοῦ Δῖνος νυνὶ βασι-
 λεύων.
 ἀτὰρ οὐδέν πω περὶ τοῦ πατάγου καὶ τῆς βροντῆς
 μ' ἐδίδαξας.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἤκουσάς μου τὰς νεφέλας ὕδατος μεστὰς ὅτι
 φημὶ
 ἐπιπιπούσας εἰς ἀλλήλας παταγεῖν διὰ τὴν πυκνό-
 τητα;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

In what way, you daredevil?

SOCRATES

When they fill up with lots of water and are forced to drift, by natural compulsion sagging down with rain, then run into one other, and become sodden, they explode and crash.

STREPSIADES

But who is it that forces them to drift? Doesn't Zeus?

SOCRATES

Not at all; it's cosmic whirl.³¹

STREPSIADES

Whirl? That's a new one on me, that Zeus is gone and Whirl now rules in his place. But you still haven't taught me anything about the thunder's crash.

SOCRATES

Didn't you hear me? I repeat: when the clouds are full of water and run into one another, they crash because of their density.

³¹ The rotation of the universe was widely recognized in the fifth century, and *dinos* "whirl" was a fundamental element of atomic theory, e.g. Democritus B167. In everyday usage *dinos* meant a kind of cup; the joke at 1473 suggests that such a cup stood outside the Thinkery instead of the usual statue of Hermes (1478 n.).

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φέρει, τουτὶ τῷ χρῇ πιστεύειν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

385 ἀπὸ σαυτοῦ ἄγε σε διδάξω.
ἤδη ζωμοῦ Παναθηναίοις ἐμπλησθεὶς εἶτ' ἐταράχθης
τὴν γαστέρα καὶ κλόνος ἐξαίφνης αὐτὴν διεκορκο-
ρύγησεν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, καὶ δεινὰ ποιεῖ γ' εὐθύς μοι καὶ
τετάρακται,
χῶσπερ βροντὴ τὸ ζωμίδιον παταγεί καὶ δεινὰ
κέκραγεν,
390 ἀτρέμας πρῶτον, παππὰξ παππάξ, κᾶπειτ' ἐπάγει
παπαπαππάξ.
χῶταν χέζω, κομιδῇ βροντᾶ, παπαπαππάξ, ὥσπερ
ἐκείναι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

σκέψαι τοίνυν ἀπὸ γαστριδίου τυννουτοῦ οἶα
πέπορδας·
τὸν δ' αἶρα τόνδ' ὄντ' ἀπέραντον πῶς οὐκ εἰκὸς
μέγα βροντᾶν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ταῦτ' ἄρα καὶ τῶνόματ' ἀλλήλοιν, “βροντὴ” καὶ
“πορδὴ”, ὁμοίω.
395 ἀλλ' ὁ κεραυνὸς πόθεν αὖ φέρεται λάμπων πυρί,
τοῦτο δίδαξον,

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Come now, why should anyone believe that?

SOCRATES

I'll teach you from your own person. Have you ever gorged yourself with soup at the Panathenaea and then had an upset stomach, and a sudden turmoil sets it all arumble?

STREPSIADES

By Apollo I have! It does carry on terribly and shake me up, and like thunder that bit of soup crashes and roars terribly, gently at first, *pappax pappax*, and then stepping up the pace, *papapappax*, and when I shit it absolutely thunders, *papapappax*, just like those Clouds!

SOCRATES

Now then, consider what farts you let off from such a little tummy; isn't it natural that this sky, being limitless, should thunder mightily?

STREPSIADES

So that's why the words are similar, *bronte* "thunder" and *porde* "fart"! But now explain this: where does the lightning bolt come from, blazing with fire, that incinerates us

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ καταφρύγει βάλλων ἡμᾶς, τοὺς δὲ ζῶντας περι-
φλεύει.

τοῦτον γὰρ δὴ φανερώς ὁ Ζεὺς ἴησ' ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπιόρ-
κους.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς, ὦ μῶρε σὺ καὶ Κρονίων ὄζων καὶ βεκκεσέ-
ληνε,

εἶπερ βάλλει τοὺς ἐπιόρκους, δῆτ' οὐχὶ Σίμων'
ἐνέπρησεν

400 οὐδὲ Κλεώνυμον οὐδὲ Θέωρον; καίτοι σφόδρα γ'
εἴσ' ἐπιόρκοι.

ἀλλὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ γε νεὼν βάλλει καὶ Σούνιον, ἄκρον
Ἀθηνέων,

καὶ τὰς δρυὺς τὰς μεγάλας, τί μαθῶν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ
δρυὺς γ' ἐπιорκεῖ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδ'· ἀτὰρ εὖ σὺ λέγειν φαίνει. τί γάρ ἐστιν
δῆθ' ὁ κεραυνός;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὅταν εἰς ταύτας ἄνεμος ξηρὸς μετεωρισθεὶς κατα-
κλεισθῇ,

405 ἔνδοθεν αὐτὰς ὥσπερ κύστιν φυσαῖ, κάπειθ' ὑπ'
ἀνάγκης

ῥήξας αὐτὰς ἔξω φέρεται σοβαρὸς διὰ τὴν πυκνό-
τητα,

ὑπὸ τοῦ ροίβδου καὶ τῆς ρύμης αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν κατα-
κάων.

CLOUDS

on contact and badly burns the survivors? It's quite obvious that Zeus hurls it against perjurers.

SOCRATES

How's that, you moron redolent of the Cronia,³² you moon-calf! If he really strikes perjurers, then why hasn't he burned up Simon or Cleonymus or Theorus, since they're paramount perjurers? On the other hand, he strikes his own temple, and Sunium headland of Athens, and the great oaks.³³ What's his point? An oak tree certainly doesn't perjure itself!

STREPSIADES

I don't know; but you seem to have a good argument. Very well, what is the thunderbolt, then?

SOCRATES

When a dry wind rises skyward and gets locked up in these Clouds, it blows them up from within like a bladder, and then by natural compulsion it bursts them and is borne out in a whoosh by dint of compression, burning itself up with the friction and velocity.

³² A festival celebrating Zeus' father Cronus, who symbolized a bygone age.

³³ Oak trees were considered sacred to Zeus.

⁴⁰¹ Ἀθηνέων Porson (cf. Hom. γ 278): Ἀθηναίων vel Ἀθηνῶν a

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ Δί' ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀτεχνῶς ἔπαθον τουτί ποτε Δια-
σίοισιν.

ὀπτῶν γαστέρα τοῖς συγγενέσιν κᾶτ' οὐκ ἔσχων
ἀμελήσας,

410 ἢ δ' ἄρ' ἐφυσᾶτ', εἴτ' ἐξαίφνης διαλακήσασα πρὸς
αὐτῶ

τῷ φθαλμῷ μου προσετίλησεν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ
πρόσωπον.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ὦ τῆς μεγάλης ἐπιθυμίας σοφίας ἄνθρωπε παρ'
ἡμῶν,

ὥς εὐδαίμων ἐν Ἀθηναίοις καὶ τοῖς Ἑλλησι γενήσῃ
εἰ μνήμων εἴ καὶ φροντιστὴς καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωρον
ἔνεστιν

415 ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ μὴ κάμνεις μήθ' ἐστὼς μήτε
βαδίζων

μήτε ῥιγῶν ἄχθει λίαν μήτ' ἀριστᾶν ἐπιθυμεῖς
οἴνου τ' ἀπέχει καὶ γυμνασίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων
ἀνοήτων

καὶ βέλτιστον τοῦτο νομίζεις, ὅπερ εἰκὸς δεξιὸν
ἄνδρα,

νικᾶν πράττων καὶ βουλευῶν καὶ τῇ γλώττῃ πολε-
μίζων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

420 ἀλλ' εἵνεκα γε ψυχῆς στερρᾶς δυσκολοκοίτου τε
μερίμνης

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

By Zeus, exactly the same thing happened to me one time at the Diasia,³⁴ when I was cooking a haggis for my relatives and forgot to make a slit. So it bloated up, then suddenly it exploded, spattering gore in my eyes and burning my face.

CHORUS LEADER

Ah, creature who yearn for grand wisdom from us, how blessed you will become among the Athenians and all Greeks, if you're retentive and a cogitator, if endurance abides in your soul, if you don't tire out either standing or walking, if you're not too annoyed by the cold or too keen on having breakfast, if you stay away from wine and gymnasiums and all other follies, and if, as befits a clever man, you consider absolute excellence to be victory in action, in counsel, and in tongue warfare.

STREPSIADES

Well, if it has to do with a rigorous soul, and restless anxiety,

³⁴ An important festival of Zeus and an occasion for family banquets.

⁴¹²⁻¹⁷ adaptavit Diogenes Laertius 2.27

⁴¹⁷ οἶνον a: ὕπνου Et. Mag.

καὶ φειδωλοῦ καὶ τρυσιβίου γαστρὸς καὶ θυμβρεπι-
 δείπνου,
 ἀμέλει, θαρρῶν εἵνεκα τούτων ἐπιχαλκεύειν παρ-
 έχοιμ' ἄν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄλλο τι δῆτ' οὐ νομεῖς ἤδη θεὸν οὐδένα πλὴν ἄπερ
 ἡμεῖς,
 τὸ Χάος τουτὶ καὶ τὰς Νεφέλας καὶ τὴν Γλῶτταν,
 τρία ταυτί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

425 οὐδ' ἂν διαλεχθείην γ' ἀτεχνῶς τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐδ' ἂν
 ἀπαντῶν,
 οὐδ' ἂν θύσαιμ' οὐδ' ἂν σπείσαιμ' οὐδ' ἐπιθείην
 λιβανωτόν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

λέγε νυν ἡμῖν ὅτι σοι δρῶμεν θαρρῶν, ὥς οὐκ
 ἀτυχήσεις
 ἡμᾶς τιμῶν καὶ θαυμάζων καὶ ζητῶν δεξιὸς εἶναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

430 ὦ δέσποιναι, δέομαι τοίνυν ὑμῶν τουτὶ πάνιν μικρόν,
 τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἶναί με λέγειν ἑκατὸν σταδίοισιν
 ἄριστον.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ' ἔσται σοι τοῦτο παρ' ἡμῶν, ὥστε τὸ λοιπόν γ'
 ἀπὸ τουδὶ
 ἐν τῷ δήμῳ γνώμας οὐδεὶς νικήσει πλείονας ἢ σύ.

CLOUDS

and a belly that's stingy, poorly nourished, and able to make a meal out of herbs, never fear: on these counts I'd dauntlessly present myself for hammering into shape.

SOCRATES

Then I take it you will now believe in no god but those we believe in: this Void, and the Clouds, and the Tongue, and only these three?

STREPSIADES

I wouldn't speak a word to the other gods even if I met them in the street; and I won't sacrifice to them, or pour them libations, or offer them incense.

CHORUS LEADER

Then tell us frankly what we can do for you, because nothing bad will happen to you if you honor and respect us and seek to be smart.

STREPSIADES

Well then, Mistresses, I ask of you this very small favor: that among the Greeks I be by a hundred miles the very best speaker.

CHORUS LEADER

Done! You will get that from us, so that from this moment on, no one will carry more motions in the assembly than you.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μή μοι γε λέγειν γνώμας μεγάλας· οὐ γὰρ τούτων
ἐπιθυμῶ,
ἀλλ' ὅσ' ἐμαντῶ στρεψοδικῆσαι καὶ τοὺς χρήστας
διολισθεῖν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

435 τεύξει τοίνυν ὦν ἰμέιρεις· οὐ γὰρ μεγάλων ἐπιθυμεῖς.
ἀλλὰ σεαντὸν παράδος θαρρῶν τοῖς ἡμετέροις προ-
πόλοισιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

δράσω ταῦθ' ὑμῖν πιστεύσας· ἡ γὰρ ἀνάγκη με πιέζει
διὰ τοὺς ἵππους τοὺς κοππατίας καὶ τὸν γάμον ὅς
μ' ἐπέτριψεν.

νῦν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς ὅτι βούλονται

440 τουτὶ τό γ' ἐμὸν σῶμ' αὐτοῖσιν
παρέχω τύπτειν, πεινῆν, διψῆν,
αὐχμεῖν, ῥιγῶν, ἀσκὸν δείρειν,
εἴπερ τὰ χρέα διαφευξοῦμαι
τοῖς τ' ἀνθρώποις εἶναι δόξω
445 θρασύς, εὐγλωττος, τολμηρός, ἴτης,
βδελυρός, ψευδῶν συγκολλητής,
εὐρησιεπής, περίτριμμα δικῶν,
κύρβις, κρόταλον, κίναδος, τρύμη,
μάσθλης, εἴρων, γλοιός, ἀλαζών,
450 κέντρων, μιάρός, στρόφισ, ἀργαλέος,
ματιολοιχός.
ταῦτ' εἴ με καλοῦσ' ἀπαντῶντες,

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

No speaking on important motions for me, please! That's not what I desire, only twisting lawsuits to my own advantage and giving my creditors the slip.

CHORUS LEADER

Then you shall get what you crave, for it is nothing grand that you desire. Now be resolute and commit yourself to our agents here.

STREPSIADES

That I will do, taking you at your word, for necessity bears down on me on account of those branded horses and the marriage that's screwed me.

So now I wholeheartedly turn this body of mine over
to them

to do with as they please, for beating, starving,
parching,

soiling, freezing, flaying into a wineskin,

if that's how I'll escape my debts

and win the world's admiration

as pushy, glib, nervy, reckless,

a disgusting fib-fabricator,

a coiner of legalese, a lawcourt smoothie,

a *corpus juris*, a castanet, a fox, a loophole,

a slicker, a double-talker, a slippery character, a fraud,

a cudgel magnet, a pariah, a twister, a pest,

a trifle licker.

If I'm called all this to my face,

they may do whatever they like with me

ARISTOPHANES

δρώντων ἀτεχνῶς ὅτι χρήζουσιν·
 κεῖ βούλονται,
 455 νῆ τὴν Δήμητρ' ἔκ μου χορδὴν
 τοῖς φροντισταῖς παραθέντων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λῆμα μὲν πάρεστι τῷδέ γ'
 οὐκ ἄτολμον ἀλλ' ἔτοιμον.
 ἴσθι δ' ὥς
 460 ταῦτα μαθὼν παρ' ἐμοῦ κλέος οὐρανόμηκες
 ἐν βροτοῖσιν ἔξεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί πείσομαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὸν πάντα χρόνον μετ' ἐμοῦ
 465 ζηλωτότατον βίον ἀνθρώπων διάξεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄρά γε τοῦτ' ἂν ἐγὼ ποτ' ὄψομαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὥστε γέ σου
 πολλοὺς ἐπὶ ταῖσι θύραις ἀεὶ καθῆσθαι,
 470 βουλομένους ἀνακοινῶσθαι τε καὶ εἰς λόγον ἐλθεῖν
 πράγματα κἀντιγραφὰς πολλῶν ταλάντων,
 475 ἄξια σῇ φρενὶ συμβουλευσομένους μετὰ σοῦ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ' ἐγχείρει τὸν πρεσβύτην ὅτιπερ μέλλεις
 προδιδάσκειν

CLOUDS

unconditionally;
and if they want,
by Demeter let them turn me into sausage
and serve it to the thinkers!

CHORUS

This one's got a spirit
that's not gutless but ready to go!
Listen,
when you've learned all this from me, sky-high glory
you'll have among mortals.

STREPSIADES

What's in store for me?

CHORUS

With us, you will live for all the rest of your days
the most enviable life in the world.

STREPSIADES

So I'm really likely to see that someday?

CHORUS

Really!
Multitudes will constantly be camped at your door,
wanting to meet with you and discuss
legal problems and claims involving vast sums,
aiming to consult about matters worth your
intelligence.

CHORUS LEADER

Now try your hand at starting the old man on whatever

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ διακίνει τὸν νοῦν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς γνώμης
ἀποπειρῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄγε δὴ, κάτειπέ μοι σὺ τὸν σαντοῦ τρόπον,
ἵν' αὐτὸν εἰδῶς ὅστις ἐστὶ μηχανὰς
480 ἤδη ᾗ τούτοις πρὸς σὲ καινὰς προσφέρω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δέ; τειχομαχεῖν μοι διανοεῖ, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ βραχέα σου πυθέσθαι βούλομαι,
εἰ μνημονικὸς εἶ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

δύο τρόπω, νῆ τὸν Δία.
ἦν μὲν γ' ὀφείλῃται τι μοι, μνήμων πάννυ,
485 εἰ δ' ὀφείλω σχέτλιος, ἐπιλήσμων πάννυ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἔνεστι δῆτά σοι λέγειν ἐν τῇ φύσει;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

λέγειν μὲν οὐκ ἔνεστ', ἀποστερεῖν δ' ἔνι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν δυνήσκει μαρθάνειν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀμέλει, καλῶς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄγε νυν ὅπως, ὅταν τι προβάλωμαι σοφὸν
490 περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, εὐθέως ὑφαρπάσει.

CLOUDS

lessons you intend to give him; agitate his mind and test his intelligence.

SOCRATES

Now then, describe for me your own characteristics; when I know what they are, on that basis I can apply to you the latest plans of attack.

STREPSIADES

How's that? Are you thinking of besieging me? Good heavens!

SOCRATES

No, I just want to ask you a few questions. For instance, do you have a good memory?

STREPSIADES

Yes and no, by Zeus: if I'm owed something, it's good, but if I'm the hapless debtor, it's bad.

SOCRATES

Well, is there eloquence in your nature?

STREPSIADES

Eloquence, no; fraudulence, yes.

SOCRATES

Then how will you manage to learn?

STREPSIADES

Don't worry, I'll do fine.

SOCRATES

Very well, whatever sage bit of cosmology I toss you, try to snap it up at once.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δαί; κυνηδὸν τὴν σοφίαν σιτήσομαι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄνθρωπος ἀμαθὴς οὕτως καὶ βάρβαρος.
δέδοικά σ', ὦ πρεσβύτε, μὴ πληγῶν δέει.
φέρ' ἴδω, τί δρᾷς ἣν τις σε τύπτῃ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τύπτομαι,

495 κάπειτ' ἐπισχὼν ὀλίγον ἐπιμαρτύρομαι
εἴτ' αὖθις ἀκαρῇ διαλιπὼν δικάζομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἴθι νυν κατάθου θοιμάτιον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἡδίκηκά τι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ γυμνοὺς εἰσιέναι νομίζεται.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχὶ φωράσων ἔγωγ' εἰσέρχομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

κατάθου. τί ληρεῖς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

500 εἰπὲ δὴ νυν μοι τοδί·
ἣν ἐπιμελὴς ὦ καὶ προθύμως μανθάνω,
τῷ τῶν μαθητῶν ἐμφορῆς γενήσομαι;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

What? Will I be consuming my sagacity like a dog?

SOCRATES

This fellow's ignorant and barbaric! Old man, I fear you'll need a whipping. Let's see, what would you do if someone hit you?

STREPSIADES

I get hit; I wait a bit and summon witnesses; after another little while I go to court.

SOCRATES

Come on, lay down your cloak.

STREPSIADES

Have I done something wrong?

SOCRATES

No, it's our custom to go inside undressed.

STREPSIADES

But I'm not looking for stolen goods in there.

SOCRATES

Lay it down! What's this jabbering?

STREPSIADES

(*disrobing*) All right then, tell me this: if I'm attentive and study hard, which of your students will I come to resemble?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ἡμιθνής γενήσομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

505 οὐ μὴ λαλήσεις, ἀλλ' ἀκολουθήσεις ἐμοὶ
ἀνύσας τι δευρὶ θάττον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εἰς τὸ χεῖρέ νυν
δός μοι μελιτοῦτταν πρότερον, ὥς δέδοικ' ἐγὼ
εἴσω καταβαίνων ὥσπερ εἰς Τροφωνίου.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

χώρει. τί κυπτάζεις ἔχων περὶ τὴν θύραν;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

510 ἀλλ' ἴθι χαίρων τῆς ἀνδρείας
οὔνεκα ταύτης.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐτυχία γένοιτο τὰν-
θρώπῳ, ὅτι προήκων

εἰς βαθὺ τῆς ἡλικίας

515 νεωτέροις τὴν φύσιν αὐ-
τοῦ πράγμασιν χρωτίζεται
καὶ σοφίαν ἐπασκεῖ.

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

In your nature you'll be indistinguishable from Chaerephon.

STREPSIADES

Heavens no, I'm going to be a zombie!

SOCRATES

Stop jabbering. Hurry up and follow me inside here, on the double!

STREPSIADES

Put a honey cake into my hands first, because I'm scared to go down inside there, as if into the cave of Trophonius.³⁵

SOCRATES

Get going! Why are you skulking around the doorway?

STREPSIADES and SOCRATES go into the Thinkery.

CHORUS LEADER

Go, and good luck to you, thanks
to this show of courage.

CHORUS

May good fortune befall
the fellow, for though advancing
to the twilight of his life,
he colors his nature
with newfangled notions
and cultivates sagacity.

³⁵ The subterranean oracular shrine of the hero Trophonius at Lebadeia (in Boeotia) contained sacred snakes, which visitors placated with honey cakes.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- ὦ θεώμενοι, κατερῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρως
 τάληθῇ, νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον τὸν ἐκθρέψαντά με.
 520 οὕτω νικῆσαιμί τ' ἐγὼ καὶ νομιζοίμην σοφὸς
 ὡς ὑμᾶς ἡγούμενος εἶναι θεατὰς δεξιούς
 καὶ ταύτην σοφώτατ' ἔχειν τῶν ἐμῶν κωμωδιῶν
 πρῶτους ἡξίωσ' ἀναγεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἥ παρέσχε μοι
 ἔργον πλείστον· εἴτ' ἀνεχώρουν ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν
 525 ἡττηθεὶς οὐκ ἄξιος ὢν. ταῦτ' οὖν ὑμῖν μέμφομαι
 τοῖς σοφοῖς, ὧν οὐνεκ' ἐγὼ ταῦτ' ἐπραγματευόμην.
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ὑμῶν ποθ' ἐκὼν προδώσω τοὺς δεξιούς.
 ἐξ ὅτου γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἡδὺ καὶ λέγειν,
 ὁ σῶφρων τε χῶ καταπύγων ἄριστ' ἠκουσάτην,
 530 καγώ, παρθένος γὰρ ἔτ' ἥ κοῦκ ἐξῆν πῶ μοι τεκεῖν,
 ἐξέθηκα, παῖς δ' ἑτέρα τις λαβοῦσ' ἀνείλετο,
 ὑμεῖς δ' ἐξεθρέψατε γενναίως καπαιδεύσατε,
 ἐκ τούτου μοι πιστὰ παρ' ὑμῶν γνώμης ἔσθ' ὄρκια.
 νῦν οὖν Ἥλέκτραν κατ' ἐκείνην ἥδ' ἡ κωμωδία
 535 ζητοῦσ' ἦλθ', ἥν που ὑπὶ τύχῃ θεαταῖς οὕτω σοφοῖς.
 γινώσεται γάρ, ἥνπερ ἴδῃ, τὰδελφοῦ τὸν βόστρυχον.
 ὡς δὲ σῶφρων ἐστὶ φύσει σκέψασθ', ἥτις πρῶτα μὲν
 οὐδὲν ἦλθε ραψαμένη σκύτινον καθειμένον
 ἐρυθρὸν ἐξ ἄκρου, παχύ, τοῖς παιδίοις ἴν' ἥ γέλως·

527 ὑμῶν] ὑμᾶς A

528 οὓς Blaydes: οἷς a

CLOUDS

CHORUS LEADER

Spectators, I will speak the truth to you frankly, so help me Dionysus, the god who reared me. So may I win the prize and be thought sage, I took you for intelligent theatergoers and this for the most sophisticated of my comedies; that is why I thought you deserved to be the first to savor it, a play that cost me very hard work. Then I lost the contest, defeated by vulgar men, though I didn't deserve to. For that I blame you sophisticated ones, for whose sake I was doing all that work. Even so, I will never deliberately betray the intelligent among you. For since the time when in this place my Virtuous Boy and my Bugged Boy³⁶ were very highly spoken of by certain gentlemen whom it is a pleasure even to mention; and when I, being a maiden still unmarried and not yet allowed to be a mother, exposed my child and another maiden took it up,³⁷ and you nobly raised and educated it—since that time I have held sworn pledges of a favorable verdict from you. So now this new comedy of mine, like the legendary Electra, has come on a quest, hoping somewhere to find similarly intelligent spectators: for she will recognize the lock of her brother's hair if she sees it.³⁸ Look how naturally decent she is: first of all, she hasn't come with any dangling leather stitched to her, red at the tip and thick, to make the children laugh; nor does

³⁶ Characters in Aristophanes' first play, *Banqueters*, which was produced by Callistratus in 427, probably at the Lenaea, and won second prize.

³⁷ I.e., another man produced the play.

³⁸ An allusion to the scene in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* (164-200) where Elektra comes to the tomb of her father Agamemnon and there recognizes a lock of her long lost brother's hair.

- 540 οὐδ' ἔσκωψεν τοὺς φαλακροὺς, οὐδὲ κόρδαχ'
 εἵλκυσεν·
 οὐδὲ πρεσβύτης ὁ λέγων τᾶπη τῇ βακτηρίᾳ
 τύπτει τὸν παρόντ', ἀφανίζων ποιηρὰ σκώμματα·
 οὐδ' εἰσῆξε δᾶδας ἔχουσ' οὐδ' "ιοῦ ἰοῦ" βοᾷ·
 ἀλλ' αὐτῇ καὶ τοῖς ἔπεσιν πιστεύουσ' ἐλήλυθεν.
- 545 κἀγὼ μὲν τοιοῦτος ἀνὴρ ὢν ποιητῆς οὐ κομῶ,
 οὐδ' ὑμᾶς ζητῶ ἔαπατᾶν δις καὶ τρις ταῦτ' εἰσάγων,
 ἀλλ' αἰὲν καινὰς ιδέας εἰσφέρων σοφίζομαι
 οὐδὲν ἀλλήλαισιν ὁμοίας καὶ πάσας δεξιᾶς·
 ὃς μέγιστον ὄντα Κλέων' ἔπαισ' εἰς τὴν γαστέρα
- 550 κοῦκ ἐτόλμησ' αὐθις ἐπεμπηδῆσ' αὐτῷ κειμένῳ.
 οὔτοι δ', ὥς ἄπαξ παρέδωκεν λαβὴν Ἑπέρβολος,
 τοῦτον δείλαιον κολετρῶσ' αἰὲν καὶ τὴν μητέρα.
 Εὐπόλις μὲν τὸν Μαρικᾶν πρῶτιστον παρὲλκυσεν
 ἐκστρέψας τοὺς ἡμετέρους Ἱππέας κακὸς κακῶς,
- 555 προσθεὶς αὐτῷ γραῦν μεθύσῃν τοῦ κόρδακος
 οὐνεχ', ἦν
 Φρύνιχος πάλαι πεποίηχ', ἦν τὸ κῆτος ἦσθιεν.
 εἶθ' Ἑρμιππος αὐθις ἐποίησεν εἰς Ἑπέρβολον,
 ἄλλοι τ' ἤδη πάντες ἐρείδουσιν εἰς Ἑπέρβολον,
 τὰς εἰκοὺς τῶν ἐγχείλεων τὰς ἐμὰς μιμούμενοι.
- 560 ὅστις οὖν τούτοισι γελᾷ, τοῖς ἐμοῖς μὴ χαιρέτω.

³⁹ A lewd dance associated with drunks and comedians.

⁴⁰ I.e. in *Knights* of 424; cf. 581 ff.

⁴¹ Cleon's successor as the leading politician in Athens; ostracized probably in 416.

she mock bald men, nor dance a *kordax*,³⁹ nor does an old man, while speaking his lines, cover up bad jokes by beating the interlocutor with his stick; nor does she dash on-stage brandishing torches, nor yell "ow ow." On the contrary, she has come relying only on herself and her script. And I myself, being a poet of the same kind, do not act like a bigwig, nor try to fool you by presenting the same material two or three times; rather I have the skill to present novel forms of comedy every time out, none of them like the others and all of them ingenious. I'm the one who hit Cleon in the belly when he was at the height of his power,⁴⁰ but I wasn't so brazen as to jump on him again when he was down. Not so these others: from the moment Hyperbolus⁴¹ lowered his guard, they have been stomping the wretch without letup, and his mother too.⁴² First of all Eupolis⁴³ dragged his *Maricas* before you, hacking over our *Knights*, hack that he is, and tacking onto it a drunken crone for the sake of the *kordax*, the same crone that Phrynichus⁴⁴ long ago put onstage, the one the sea monster wanted to eat. Then Hermippus⁴⁵ again attacked Hyperbolus in a play, and now all the others⁴⁶ are launching into Hyperbolus, copying my own similes about the eels.⁴⁷ And so whoever finds their plays funny, may he not enjoy mine;

⁴² As would Aristophanes himself: *Thesm.* 839 ff.

⁴³ Eupolis, a close contemporary of Aristophanes and regarded in antiquity as his chief rival, produced his first play in 429 and died c. 411. His *Maricas* was produced at the Lenaea of 421.

⁴⁴ Phrynichus made his debut in 429 and was still competing in 405.

⁴⁵ Hermippus, who had been competing since the 430's, attacked Hyperbolus in *Breadsellers*, produced in 420 or 419.

⁴⁶ E.g. Plato in *Hyperbolus*. ⁴⁷ Cf. *Knights* 864-867.

ARISTOPHANES

ἦν δ' ἔμοι καὶ τοῖσιν ἔμοῖς εὐφραίνησθ' εὐρήμασιν,
εἰς τὰς ὥρας τὰς ἑτέρας εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσετε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) ὑψιμέδοντα μὲν θεῶν
Ζῆνα τύραννον εἰς χορὸν
565 πρῶτα μέγαν κικλήσκω
τόν τε μεγασθενῇ τριαίνης ταμίαν,
γῆς τε καὶ ἁλμυρᾶς θαλάσ-
σης ἄγριον μοχλευτήν·
καὶ μεγαλῶνυμον ἡμέτερον πατέρ'
570 Αἰθέρα σεμνότατον, βιοθρέμμονα πάντων·
τόν θ' ἵππονῶμαν, ὃς ὑπερ-
λάμπροις ἀκτῖσιν κατέχει
γῆς πέδον, μέγας ἐν θεοῖς
ἐν θνητοῖσί τε δαίμων.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 575 ὦ σοφώτατοι θεαταί, δεῦρο τὸν νοῦν προσέχετε
ἡδίκημένοι γὰρ ὑμῖν μεμφόμεσθ' ἐναντίον.
πλείστα γὰρ θεῶν ἀπάντων ὠφελούσαις τὴν πόλιν
δαιμόνων ἡμῖν μόναις οὐ θύετ' οὐδὲ σπένδετε,
αἵτινες τηροῦμεν ὑμᾶς. ἦν γὰρ ἥ τις ἔξοδος
580 μηδεὶν ξὺν νῶ, τότε ἢ βροντῶμεν ἢ ψακάζομεν.
εἶτα τὸν θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸν βυρσοδέψην Παφλαγόνα
ἡνίχ' ἡρεῖσθε στρατηγόν, τὰς ὀφρῦς ξυνήγομεν
κάποιουμέν δεινά, βροντῇ δ' ἐρράγη δι' ἀστραπῆς.
ἡ σελήνη δ' ἐξέλειπεν τὰς ὁδοὺς, ὁ δ' ἥλιος
585 τὴν θρυαλλίδ' εἰς ἑαυτὸν εὐθέως ξυνελκύσας

CLOUDS

but if you take pleasure in me and my creations, you will be respected in ages to come for your good sense.

CHORUS

High guardian of the gods,
Zeus the great chieftain,
I invite first to my dance;
and the hugely strong Keeper of the Trident,
wild upheaver
of land and salty sea;⁴⁸
and our own father of glorious name,
most august Empyrean,⁴⁹ nourisher of all life;
and the Charioteer, who
covers the plain of earth
with dazzling rays, a mighty deity
among gods and mortals.

CHORUS LEADER

Most sage spectators, give us your attention, for we are going to reproach you with the wrong you have done us. Of all the gods we do the most good for your city, but we are the only deities to whom you make no offerings or libations, the very ones who watch over you! Whenever there is a senseless expedition, we thunder and rain.⁵⁰ Furthermore, when you were about to elect as general the godforsaken tanner Paphlagon,⁵¹ we furrowed our brows and carried on dreadfully: thunder crashed amid lightning bolts, the moon deserted her orbit, and the sun forthwith

⁴⁸ I.e. Poseidon.

⁴⁹ *Aether*, a scientific entity; cf. 265.

⁵⁰ Signs of ill omen. ⁵¹ I.e. Cleon (cf. *Knights*); the election was held in March of 424/3.

οὐ φανεῖν ἔφασκεν ὑμῖν εἰ στρατηγήσοι Κλέων.
 ἀλλ' ὅμως εἴλεσθε τοῦτον· φασὶ γὰρ δυσβουλίαν
 τῇδε τῇ πόλει προσεῖναι, ταῦτα μέντοι τοὺς θεοὺς,
 ἅττ' ἂν ὑμεῖς ἐξαμάρτητ', ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τρέπειν.
 590 ὥς δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ξυνοίσει, ῥαδίως διδάξομεν.
 ἦν Κλέωνα τὸν λάρον δώρων ἐλόντες καὶ κλοπῆς
 εἶτα φιμώσητε τούτου τῷ ξύλῳ τὸν αὐχένα,
 αὐθις εἰς τάρχαϊον ὑμῖν, εἴ τι κᾶξημάρτετε,
 ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τὸ πρᾶγμα τῇ πόλει ξυνοίσεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) ἀμφί μοι αὖτε Φοῖβ' ἄναξ
 596 Δήλιε, Κυνθίαν ἔχων
 ὑψικέρατα πέτραν·
 ἥ τ' Ἐφέσου μάκαιρα πάγχρυσον ἔχεις
 οἶκον, ἐν ᾧ κόραι σε Λυ-
 600 δῶν μεγάλως σέβουσιν·
 ἥ τ' ἐπιχώριος ἡμετέρα θεὸς
 αἰγίδος ἡνίοχος, πολιοῦχος Ἀθάνα·
 Παρνασσίαν θ' ὅς κατέχων
 πέτραν σὺν πεύκαις σελαγεί
 605 Βάκχαις Δελφίσιν ἐμπρέπων
 κωμαστῆς Διόνυσος.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἡνίχ' ἡμεῖς δεῦρ' ἀφορμᾶσθαι παρεσκευάσμεθα,
 ἡ Σελήνη ξυντυχοῦσ' ἡμῖν ἐπέστειλεν φράσαι
 πρῶτα μὲν χαίρειν Ἀθηναίοισι καὶ τοῖς ξυμμάχοις·

CLOUDS

withdrew his wick and refused to shine for you if Cleon became general.⁵² But you elected him anyway! They say that bad policymaking afflicts this city, but also that whatever mistakes you make the gods convert into successes. And we will easily teach you how even this mistake can benefit you. If you convict that vulture Cleon of bribery and theft, then clamp his neck in the pillory, your situation will be as it was before, and everything will turn out better for the city, in spite of your mistake.

CHORUS

Join me as well, Phoebus, Lord
of Delos, who dwell on Cynthus'
sheer escarpment of rock;⁵³
and you, blest Maiden, who dwell at Ephesus
in the golden house, where Lydian maidens
greatly revere you;⁵⁴
and our own native goddess,
wielder of the aegis, guardian of the city;
and he who haunts Parnassus' rock
and glows in the light of pine torches,
eminent among Delphic bacchants,
the reveller Dionysus.

CHORUS LEADER

When we were ready to set forth on our trip here, the Moon happened to run into us and told us first to say hello⁵⁵ to the Athenians and their allies, but then she ex-

⁵² In 424/3 there was a lunar eclipse on 29 October and a solar eclipse on 21 March. ⁵³ I.e. Apollo.

⁵⁴ I.e. Artemis. ⁵⁵ Perhaps a jab at Cleon, whom Eupolis mocked for using the epistolary greeting *chairein* in an official dispatch to the Athenians after his victory at Pylos in 424 (fr. 331).

- 610 εἶτα θυμαίνειν ἔφασκε. δεινὰ γὰρ πεπονθέναι
 ὠφελούσ' ὑμᾶς ἅπαντας οὐ λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐμφανῶς·
 πρῶτα μὲν τοῦ μηνὸς εἰς δᾶδ' οὐκ ἔλαττον ἢ
 δραχμὴν,
 ὥστε καὶ λέγειν ἅπαντας ἐξιόντας ἐσπέρας
 “μὴ πρίη, παῖ, δᾶδ', ἐπειδὴ φῶς Σεληναίης καλόν.”
- 615 ἄλλα τ' εὖ δρᾶν φησὶν, ὑμᾶς δ' οὐκ ἄγειν τὰς ἡμέρας
 οὐδὲν ὀρθῶς, ἀλλ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω κυδοιδοπᾶν,
 ὥστ' ἀπειλεῖν φησὶν αὐτῇ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐκάστοτε,
 ἡνίκ' ἂν ψευσθῶσι δείπνου καπίωσιν οἴκαδε
 τῆς ἐορτῆς μὴ τυχόντες κατὰ λόγον τῶν ἡμερῶν.
- 620 κᾶθ' ὅταν θύειν δέη, στρεβλοῦτε καὶ δικάζετε,
 πολλάκις δ' ἡμῶν ἀγόντων τῶν θεῶν ἀπαστίαν,
 ἡνίκ' ἂν πενθῶμεν ἢ τὸν Μέμνον' ἢ Σαρπηδόνα,
 σπένδεθ' ὑμεῖς καὶ γελᾶτ'· ἀνθ' ὧν λαχὼν Ὑπέρβολος
 τῆτες ἱερομνημονεῖν κᾶπειθ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν τῶν θεῶν
- 625 τὸν στέφανον ἀφηρέθη· μᾶλλον γὰρ οὕτως εἴσεται
 κατὰ σελήνην ὥς ἄγειν χρὴ τοῦ βίου τὰς ἡμέρας.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

- μὰ τὴν Ἀναπνοήν, μὰ τὸ Χάος, μὰ τὸν Ἀέρα,
 οὐκ εἶδον οὕτως ἄνδρ' ἄγροικον οὐδαμοῦ
 οὐδ' ἄπορον οὐδὲ σκαιὸν οὐδ' ἐπιλήσιμονα,
- 630 ὅστις σκαλαθυρμάτι' ἄττα μικρὰ μανθάνων
 ταῦτ' ἐπιλέλησται πρὶν μαθεῖν. ὅμως γε μὴν
 αὐτὸν καλῶ θύραζε δεῦρο πρὸς τὸ φῶς.

CLOUDS

pressed her annoyance at the awful way she has been treated, after helping you all not with mere talk but with plain action. First of all, she saves you at least a drachma per month in torches, so that when you go out in the evening you all say, "Don't buy a torch, boy; the Moon's shining nicely." She says that though she does you other favors too, you don't keep track of your dates correctly, but scramble them topsy-turvy, so that the gods scold her, she says, every time they're misled about a dinner and go home having missed the festival that was specified in the calendar. Furthermore, when a sacrifice is scheduled, you're busy armtwisting witnesses and rendering verdicts; and time and again, when we gods are holding a fast in mourning for Memnon or Sarpedon,⁵⁶ you're pouring libations and laughing. As a result Hyperbolus, allotted this year to be Holy Recorder, was stripped of his chaplet by us gods.⁵⁷ That way he will better understand that the days of his life should be reckoned by the Moon.

Enter SOCRATES from the Thinkery.

SOCRATES

By Respiration, by Void, by Air, I've never seen a man so rustic anywhere, so inept, brainless, and forgetful, the sort who tries to learn a few dinky snippets and then forgets them before he's learned them. All the same I'll call him

⁵⁶ Memnon, son of Dawn, and Sarpedon, son of Zeus, were killed at Troy.

⁵⁷ Holders of this office represented Athens at the Amphictyonic Council at Delphi; perhaps the wind had blown off Hyperbolus' chaplet during an official ceremony.

ARISTOPHANES

ποῦ Στρεψιάδης; ἔξει τὸν ἀσκάντην λαβών;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔωσί μ' ἔξενεγκεῖν οἱ κόρεις.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀνύσας τι κατάθου καὶ πρόσσεχε τὸν νοῦν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

635

ἰδού.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄγε δῆ, τί βούλει πρῶτα νυνὶ μαυθάνειν
ὧν οὐκ ἐδιδάχθης πώποτ' οὐδέν; εἰπέ μοι.
πότερον περὶ μέτρων ἢ ρύθμων ἢ περὶ ἐπῶν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

640

περὶ τῶν μέτρων ἔγωγ'. ἔναγχος γάρ ποτε
ὑπ' ἀλφитаμοιβοῦ παρεκόπην διχοινίκῳ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ τοῦτ' ἐρωτῶ σ', ἀλλ' ὅ τι κάλλιστον μέτρον
ἡγεί, πότερον τὸ τρίμετρον ἢ τὸ τετράμετρον;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδὲν πρότερον ἡμιέκτεω.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν λέγεις, ὦνθρωπε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

περίδου νυν ἐμοὶ

645

εἰ μὴ τετράμετρόν ἐστιν ἡμιέκτεων.

⁶³⁸ ἢ ρύθμων ἢ περὶ ἐπῶν Hermann: ἢ περὶ ἐπῶν ἢ
ρύθμων a

CLOUDS

outside here into the light. Where's Strepsiades? Will you pick up your bed and come out?

STREPSIADES

I can't; the bedbugs won't let me bring it out!

Enter STREPSIADES.

SOCRATES

Hurry up and put it down, and pay attention.

STREPSIADES

There you are.

SOCRATES

Very well then, what would you begin learning now, of the subjects you were never taught anything about? Tell me, would it be measures, or rhythms, or words?

STREPSIADES

I'll take the measures: the other day a corn dealer shorted me two quarts.

SOCRATES

That's not what I'm asking you; I'm asking what you consider to be the most beautiful measure, the three-measure or the four-measure?

STREPSIADES

I say nothing beats the gallon.

SOCRATES

You're making no sense, man!

STREPSIADES

Bet me then, that a gallon isn't a four-measure.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εἰς κόρακας. ὥς ἄγροικος εἶ καὶ δυσμαθής.
ταχύ γ' ἂν δύναιο μανθάνειν περὶ ῥυθμῶν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δέ μ' ὠφελήσουσ' οἱ ῥυθμοὶ πρὸς τᾶλφιτα;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

650 πρῶτον μὲν εἶναι κομψὸν ἐν συνουσίᾳ,
ἐπαΐειν θ' ὁποῖός ἐστι τῶν ῥυθμῶν
κατ' ἐνόπλιον, χῶποῖος αὖ κατὰ δάκτυλον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κατὰ δάκτυλον; νῆ τὸν Δί', ἀλλ' οἶδ'.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εἰπέ δή.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τίς ἄλλος ἀντὶ τουτουὶ τοῦ δακτύλου;
πρὸ τοῦ μέν, ἔτ' ἐμοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος, οὔτοσί.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀγρεῖος εἶ καὶ σκαιός.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

655 οὐ γὰρ ὥζυρὲ
τούτων ἐπιθυμῶ μανθάνειν οὐδέν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τί δαί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐκεῖν' ἐκείνο, τὸν ἀδικώτατον λόγον.

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

To hell with you! You're a stupid clod. No doubt you'd soon learn about rhythms!

STREPSIADES

But how will these rhythms help me get my daily bread?

SOCRATES

To begin with, by making you smart in society, and enabling you to recognize which rhythms are shaped for marches, say, and which by the finger.⁵⁸

STREPSIADES

By the finger? That one I know, by Zeus.

SOCRATES

Well, tell me then.

STREPSIADES

What could it be but this finger here? (*raising his middle finger to Socrates*) In the old days, when I was a boy, it was this one.

SOCRATES

You're a brainless lout!

STREPSIADES

The fact is, poor fellow, I don't care to learn any of this stuff.

SOCRATES

What *do* you want then?

STREPSIADES

That one, that, that Very Worst Argument!

⁵⁸ I.e. the dactylic meter.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἕτερα δέῃ σε πρότερα τούτου μανθάνειν,
τῶν τετραπόδων ἅττ' ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς ἄρρενα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

660 ἀλλ' οἶδ' ἔγωγε τᾶρρεν', εἰ μὴ μαίνομαι·
κριός, τράγος, ταῦρος, κύων, ἀλεκτρυνών.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὁρᾷς ἂ πάσχεις; τήν τε θήλειαν καλεῖς
ἀλεκτρυνόνα κατὰ ταῦτ' οὐ καὶ τὸν ἄρρενα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς δὴ, φέρε;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

πῶς; ἀλεκτρυνὼν καὶ ἀλεκτρυνών.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

665 νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ. νῦν δὲ πῶς με χρὴ καλεῖν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀλεκτρύαιναν, τὸν δ' ἕτερον ἀλέκτορα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλεκτρύαιναν; εὖ γε νῆ τὸν Ἀέρα·
ὥστ' ἀντὶ τούτου τοῦ διδάγματος μόνου
διαλφισώσω σου κύκλῳ τὴν κάρδοπον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

670 ἰδοὺ μάλ' αὖθις, τοῦθ' ἕτερον. τὴν κάρδοπον
ἄρρενα καλεῖς θήλειαν οὖσαν.

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

But there are other things you must learn before that; say, which of the quadrupeds are strictly speaking masculine.⁵⁹

STREPSIADES

I certainly know the masculine ones, if I'm not daft: ram, billy goat, bull, dog, fowl.

SOCRATES

Do you see your mistake? You use the same word to refer both to the female fowl and the male.

STREPSIADES

How's that, I'd like to know?

SOCRATES

How? Fowl and fowl.

STREPSIADES

That's right, by Poseidon. Now just how am I supposed to refer to them?

SOCRATES

"Fowless," and the other is "fowl."

STREPSIADES

Fowless? By Air, that's good. So good that for this lesson alone I'll fill up your mortar all around with groats.

SOCRATES

There, you did it again; this is another example. You refer to a masculine mortar, though it's a feminine noun.

⁵⁹ The following passage parodies sophistic (e.g. Prodicus') prescriptions for grammatically more precise usage, in this case, more consistent marking of the gender of nouns.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τῷ τρόπῳ;

ἄρρενα καλῶ ἔγὼ κάρδοπον;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

μάλιστα γε,

ὥσπερ γε καὶ Κλεώνυμον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς δῆ; φράσον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ταὐτὸν δύναται σοι κάρδοπος Κλεωνύμῳ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

675 ἄλλ' ὦ ἑγὰρ, οὐδ' ἦν κάρδοπος Κλεωνύμῳ,
ἄλλ' ἐν θυείᾳ στρογγύλῃ γ' ἀνεμάττετο.
ἀτὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν πῶς με χρὴ καλεῖν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὅπως;

τὴν καρδόπην, ὥσπερ καλεῖς τὴν Σωστράτην.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὴν καρδόπην θήλειαν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὀρθῶς γὰρ λέγεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

680 ἐκεῖνο δύναμαι· καρδόπη, Κλεωνύμη.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἔτι δέ γε περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων μαθεῖν σε δεῖ,
ἅττ' ἄρρεν' ἐστίν, ἅττα δ' αὐτῶν θήλεα.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

How so? Do I refer to "mortar" as masculine?

SOCRATES

Absolutely, just like "Cleonymus."

STREPSIADES

How's that? Tell me.

SOCRATES

For you, "mortar" and "Cleonymus" are formally equivalent.

STREPSIADES

But dear fellow, Cleonymus never had a mortar; a round can was where *his* kneading was done! Anyway, how should I say it from now on?

SOCRATES

How? "Morté," just as you say Sostraté.

STREPSIADES

"Morté" is feminine?

SOCRATES

That's correct.

STREPSIADES

I can handle that: morté, Cleonymé.

SOCRATES

But you still must learn about names, which of them are masculine and which feminine.

680 δύναμαι West: δ' ἦν ἄν a

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οἶδ' ἔγωγ' ἃ θήλε' ἐστίν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εἰπέ δή.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

Λύσιλλα, Φίλινα, Κλειταγόρα, Δημητρία.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄρρενα δὲ ποῖα τῶν ὀνομάτων;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

685 μυρία.

Φιλόξενος, Μελησίας, Ἀμυνίας.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' ὦ πόνηρε, ταῦτά γ' ἔστ' οὐκ ἄρρενα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἄρρεν' ὑμῖν ἐστίν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδαμῶς γ', ἐπεὶ

πῶς γ' ἂν καλέσειας ἐντυχὼν Ἀμυνία;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

690 ὅπως ἄν; ὠδί· δεῦρο δεῦρ', Ἀμυνία.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὁρᾷς; γυναῖκα τὴν Ἀμυνίαν καλεῖς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ οὐν δικαίως, ἥτις οὐ στρατεύεται;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

But I know which are feminine.

SOCRATES

Tell me then.

STREPSIADES

Lysilla, Philinna, Cleitagora, Demetria.

SOCRATES

And which are masculine?

STREPSIADES

Zillions: Philoxenus, Melesias, Amynias.

SOCRATES

But those aren't masculine, you nitwit!

STREPSIADES

You people don't think they're masculine?

SOCRATES

Not at all. Look, how would you address Amynias if you happened to see him?

STREPSIADES

How? This way: "Over here, over here, Amynia!"⁶⁰

SOCRATES

See? You're calling Amynias a woman.

STREPSIADES

Isn't that appropriate, since she doesn't go out to battle?

⁶⁰ *-ia*, the vocative ending of Greek masculine names in *-ias*, is formally like a feminine.

⁶⁸⁶ Ἀμυνίας] Ἀμεινίας V fort. recte

ARISTOPHANES

ἀτὰρ τί ταῦθ' ἃ πάντες ἴσμεν μανθάνω;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ κατακλινεῖς δευρί—

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δρῶ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

695 ἐκφρόντισόν τι τῶν σεαυτοῦ πραγμάτων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὴ δῆθ', ἱκετεύω, 'νταῦθά γ', ἀλλ' εἴπερ γε χρή,
χαμαί μ' ἔασον αὐτὰ ταῦτ' ἐκφροντίσαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστι παρὰ ταῦτ' ἄλλα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.

οἶαν δίκην τοῖς κόρεσι δώσω τήμερον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) φρόντιζε δὴ καὶ διάθρει

701 πάντα τρόπον τε σαυτὸν

στρόβει πυκνώσας. ταχὺς δ', ὅταν εἰς ἄπορον
πέσης, ἐπ' ἄλλο πῆδα

705 νόημα φρενός· ὕπνος δ' ἀπέ-
στω γλυκύθυμος ὁμμάτων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀτταταῖ ἀτταταῖ.

706 post hunc versum lacunam suspicatur Σ^E ad 700 et 804

CLOUDS

But what's the point of my learning these things? We all know them.

SOCRATES

No point at all, by god. (*indicating the bed*) Just lie down here.

STREPSIADES

And do what?

SOCRATES

Think out one of your own problems.

STREPSIADES

Oh please, I beg you, not there! If I really must, let me do my thinking on the ground instead.

SOCRATES

There's only one way to do this.

STREPSIADES

Heavens me, I'm going to pay the bedbugs dearly today!

Exit SOCRATES.

CHORUS

Now think and contemplate,
twirl yourself every way
and concentrate; and whenever you hit a dead end,
quickly jump to another
line of thought; and let sweet-spirited sleep
be remote from your eyes.

STREPSIADES

Ouch! Ouch!

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί πάσχεις; τί κάμνεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀπόλλυμαι δείλαιος. ἐκ τοῦ σκίμποδος
 710 δάκνουσί μ' ἐξέρποντες οἱ Κορίνθιοι,
 καὶ τὰς πλευρὰς δαρδάπτουσιν
 καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκπίνουσιν
 καὶ τοὺς ὄρχεις ἐξέλκουσιν
 καὶ τὸν πρωκτὸν διορύττουσιν,
 715 καί μ' ἀπολοῦσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μή νυν βαρέως ἄλγει λίαν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ πῶς; ὅτε μου
 φρούδα τὰ χρήματα, φρούδη χροιά,
 φρούδη ψυχὴ, φρούδη δ' ἐμβάς,
 720 καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς
 φρουρᾶς ἄδων
 ὀλίγου φρούδος γεγένημαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; οὐχὶ φροντίζεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐγώ;
 νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ τί δῆτ' ἐφρόντισας;

CLOUDS

CHORUS

What's the matter? What's the trouble?

STREPSIADES

Calamity! I'm undone! Some Cootie-rinthians are crawling out of this pallet and biting me!

They're chomping my flanks,
draining my lifeblood,
yanking my balls,
poking my arsehole
and altogether killing me!

CHORUS

Well, don't make such a fuss about it.

STREPSIADES

Just what do you suggest?

Gone is my money, gone my suntan,
gone my lifeblood, gone my shoes;⁶¹
and to top off these misfortunes,
I whistle in the dark,
and I'm all but gone myself!

Enter SOCRATES.

SOCRATES

Hey, what are you up to? Aren't you thinking?

STREPSIADES

Me? Yes I am, by Poseidon.

SOCRATES

And what have you thought of?

⁶¹ In tragic style, reminiscent of Euripides' *Hecuba* 159-61.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

725 ὑπὸ τῶν κόρεων εἴ μου τι περιλειφθήσεται.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀπολεῖ κάκιστ'.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' ὦ 'γάθ' ἀπόλωλ' ἀρτίως.

ΚΟΡΥΘΑΙΑ

οὐ μαλθακιστέ' ἀλλὰ περικαλυπτέα.
ἐξευρετέος γὰρ νοῦς ἀποστερητικὸς
κάπαιόλημ'.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἶμοι τίς ἂν δῆτ' ἐπιβάλοι

730 ἐξ ἀρνακίδων γνώμην ἀποστερητρίδα;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

φέρε νυν ἀθρήσω πρῶτον, ὅτι δρᾶ, τουτονί.
οὗτος, καθεύδεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω 'γὼ μὲν οὔ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἔχεις τι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ'.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν πάνυ;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Whether the bedbugs will leave anything of me behind.

SOCRATES

Oh go to hell!

STREPSIADES

But I'm already there, dear fellow!

Exit SOCRATES.

CHORUS LEADER

You mustn't soften; cover your head, for you have to discover a fraudacious scheme and a swindle.

STREPSIADES

Damn, if only someone would lay a fraudulent plan on me, to go with these coverlets!

Enter SOCRATES.

SOCRATES

Now then, I'll begin by observing what this one's up to. You there, are you asleep?

STREPSIADES

By Apollo, I'm *not*.

SOCRATES

Have you come up with anything?

STREPSIADES

I certainly haven't.

SOCRATES

Nothing at all?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐδέν γε πλὴν ἢ τὸ πέος ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

735 οὐκ ἐγκαλυψάμενος ταχέως τι φροντιεῖς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

περὶ τοῦ; σὺ γάρ μοι τοῦτο φράσον, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς ὅτι βούλει πρῶτος ἐξευρὼν λέγε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀκήκοας μυριάκις ἀγὼ βούλομαι,
περὶ τῶν τόκων, ὅπως ἂν ἀποδῶ μηδενί.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

740 ἴθι νυν καλύπτου, καὶ σχάσας τὴν φροντίδα
λεπτὴν κατὰ μικρὸν περιφρόνει τὰ πράγματα
ὀρθῶς διαιρῶν καὶ σκοπῶν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἔχ' ἀτρέμα· καὶ ἀπορῆς τι τῶν νοημάτων,
ἀφείς ἄπελθε, κᾶτα τῇ γνώμῃ πάλιν
745 κίνησον αὐθις αὐτὸ καὶ ζυγώθρισον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Σωκρατίδιον φίλτατον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τί, ὦ γέρον;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Not a thing, except my cock in my right hand.

SOCRATES

Please cover up and think of something, quick.

STREPSIADES

But what? You tell me that, Socrates.

SOCRATES

First tell me in your own words what you want to discover.

STREPSIADES

You've heard a million times what I want: my interest payments, a way to avoid paying them to anyone.

SOCRATES

Go on then, cover up; now cut loose your thinking and refine it; examine the problem piece by piece, correctly sorting and investigating.

STREPSIADES

Ouch, oh my!

SOCRATES

Hold still; and if you hit a dead end with one of your ideas, toss it aside and abandon it, then later try putting it in play again with your mind and weigh it up.

STREPSIADES

Socratikins, my darling!

SOCRATES

What, old man?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔχω τόκον γνώμην ἀποστερητικήν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἐπίδειξον αὐτήν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εἰπέ δὴ νυν μοι—

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τὸ τί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

750 γυναιῖκα φαρμακίδ' εἰ πριάμενος Θετταλὴν
καθέλοιμι νύκτωρ τὴν σελήνην, εἶτα δὴ
αὐτὴν καθείρξαιμ' εἰς λοφεῖον στρογγύλον
ὥσπερ κάτροπτον, κᾶτα τηροίην ἔχων.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τί δῆτα τοῦτ' ἂν ὠφελήσκειν σ' ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὅτι

εἰ μηκέτ' ἀνατέλλοι σελήνη μηδαμοῦ,
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην τοὺς τόκους.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

755 ὅτιν' τί δῆ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὅτιν' κατὰ μῆνα τὰργύριον δανείζεται.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εὖ γ'. ἀλλ' ἕτερον αὖ σοι προβαλῶ τι δεξιόν.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

I've got a fraudacious scheme for dodging interest!

SOCRATES

Present it.

STREPSIADES

Now then, tell me...

SOCRATES

What?

STREPSIADES

Suppose I bought a Thessalian witch and had her pull down the moon at night, and then locked it up in a round case, like a mirror, and then stood guard over it.

SOCRATES

And how would that help you?

STREPSIADES

How? If the moon never again rose anywhere, I'd never pay my interest.

SOCRATES

And why not?

STREPSIADES

Because money is loaned out by the month!

SOCRATES

That's good! Now let me toss you something else that's

ARISTOPHANES

εἴ σοι γράφοιτο πεντετάλαντός τις δίκη,
ὅπως ἂν αὐτὴν ἀφανίσειας εἰπέ μοι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

760 ὅπως; ὅπως; οὐκ οἶδ'. ἀτὰρ ζητητέον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

μή νυν περὶ σαυτὸν εἶλλε τὴν γνώμην αἰεί,
ἀλλ' ἀποχάλα τὴν φροντίδ' εἰς τὸν ἀέρα
λινόδετον ὥσπερ μηλολόνθην τοῦ ποδός.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἤρρηκ' ἀφάνισιν τῆς δίκης σοφωτάτην,
ὥστ' αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν σέ μοι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

765 ποίαν τινά;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἤδη παρὰ τοῖσι φαρμακοπώλαις τὴν λίθον
ταύτην ἐόρακας, τὴν καλήν, τὴν διαφανῆ,
ἀφ' ἧς τὸ πῦρ ἄπτουσι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τὴν ὕαλον λέγεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

770 ἔγωγε. φέρε, τί δῆτ' ἂν, εἰ ταύτην λαβών,
ὁπότε γράφοιτο τὴν δίκην ὁ γραμματεὺς,
ἀπωτέρω στὰς ὧδε πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον
τὰ γράμματ' ἐκτῆξαιμι τῆς ἐμῆς δίκης;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

σοφῶς γε νῆ τὰς Χάριτας.

CLOUDS

challenging. If a lawsuit were filed against you for five talents, how would you get it dismissed? Tell me.

STREPSIADES

How? How? Don't know. I've got to think.

SOCRATES

Now don't keep winding yourself up in your thoughts; rather, unreel your mind into the air, like a beetle leashed by its leg with a thread.

STREPSIADES

I've found a brilliant dismissal of that lawsuit; even you'll have to agree.

SOCRATES

What sort of dismissal?

STREPSIADES

Have you ever seen that stone at pharmacies, the nice transparent one, that they light fires with?

SOCRATES

You mean glass?

STREPSIADES

That's it. OK, what if I got that, and when the clerk was entering the lawsuit, if I stood away a bit, like this, with my back to the sun, couldn't I melt away the record of my case?

SOCRATES

By the Graces, that's ingenious!

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἶμ', ὥς ἤδομαι
ὅτι πεντετάλαντος διαγέγραπταί μοι δίκη.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄγε δὴ ταχέως τουτὶ ξυνάρπασον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

775

τὸ τί;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὅπως ἀποστρέψαις ἂν ἀντιδικῶν δίκην,
μέλλων ὀφλήσειν, μὴ παρόντων μαρτύρων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φανλότατα καὶ ῥᾶστ'.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εἰπὲ δὴ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ δὴ λέγω.

780 εἰ πρόσθεν ἔτι μιᾶς ἐνεστώσης δίκης
πρὶν τὴν ἐμὴν καλεῖσθ' ἀπαγξαίμην τρέχων.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν λέγεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγ', ἐπεὶ
οὐδεὶς κατ' ἐμοῦ τεθνεῶτος εἰσάζει δίκην.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὕθλεις. ἄπερρ'. οὐκ ἂν διδαξαίμην σ' ἔτι.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Gosh, how good I feel! I've had a five-talent lawsuit expunged!

SOCRATES

Come on then, quickly snap up this one.

STREPSIADES

What is it?

SOCRATES

See if you can present a counterargument that rebuts a lawsuit you were about to lose for lack of witnesses.

STREPSIADES

That's very simple and very easy.

SOCRATES

Tell me.

STREPSIADES

Here goes then. When only one case was left on the docket before mine was called, I could run off and hang myself!

SOCRATES

You're making no sense.

STREPSIADES

Heavens above, I am too making sense: nobody's about to bring a lawsuit against me if I'm dead!

SOCRATES

You're blathering. Get lost! I'm not going to be your teacher any longer.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οτιῇ τί; ναί, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

785 ἀλλ' εὐθὺς ἐπιλήθαι σύ γ' ἄττ' ἂν καὶ μάθης.
ἐπεὶ τί νυνὶ πρῶτον ἐδιδάχθης; λέγε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φέρ' ἴδω, τί μέντοι πρῶτον ἦν; τί πρῶτον ἦν;
τίς ἦν ἐν ἧ ματτόμεθα μέντοι τάλφιτα;
οἴμοι, τίς ἦν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐκ εἰς κόρακας ἀποφθερεῖ,
790 ἐπιλησμότατον καὶ σκαιότατον γερόντιον;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμοι. τί οὖν δῆθ' ὁ κακοδαίμων πείσομαι;
ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλοῦμαι μὴ μαθὼν γλωττοστροφεῖν.
ἀλλ' ὦ Νεφέλαι, χρηστόν τι συμβουλεύσατε.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἡμεῖς μέν, ὦ πρεσβῦτα, συμβουλεύομεν,
795 εἴ σοι τις υἱὸς ἐστὶν ἐκτεθραμμένος,
πέμπειν ἐκείνον ἀντὶ σαυτοῦ μανθάνειν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἔμοιγ' υἱὸς καλὸς τε καγαθός·
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐθέλει γὰρ μανθάνειν, τί ἐγὼ πάθω;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

σὺ δ' ἐπιτρέπεις;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Why not? In heaven's name, please, Socrates!

SOCRATES

But you immediately forget anything you've learned. Look, what was your first lesson just now? Speak up.

STREPSIADES

Let me see, whatever was first? What was first? What was it that we knead groats in? Damn me, what was it?

SOCRATES

To hell and be damned with you, you oblivious, moronic old coot! (*he turns his back on Strepsiadēs*)

STREPSIADES

Dear me, I'm out of luck; what's going to happen to me now? I'm a goner if I don't learn tongue twisting. You Clouds, please give me some good advice.

CHORUS LEADER

What we advise, old man, is that if you have a grown-up son, send him to school in your place.

STREPSIADES

Why, I do have a son, a fine gentleman, but he refuses to go to school, so what can I do?

CHORUS LEADER

And you give in to him?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εὐσωματεῖ γὰρ καὶ σφριγᾶ,

- 800 κάστ' ἐκ γυναικῶν εὐπτέρων καὶ Κοισύρας.
 ἀτὰρ μέτειμί γ' αὐτόν· ἦν δὲ μὴ θέλῃ,
 οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐκ ἐξελῶ 'κ τῆς οἰκίας.
 ἀλλ' ἐπανάμεινόν μ' ὀλίγον εἰσελθὼν χρόνον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) ἄρ' αἰσθάνει πλείστα δι' ἧ-
 805 μᾶς ἀγάθ' αὐτίχ' ἔξων
 μόνας θεῶν; ὥς ἔτοιμος ὅδ' ἐστὶν ἅπαν-
 τα δρᾶν ὅσ' ἂν κελεύῃς.
 σὺ δ' ἀνδρὸς ἐκπεπληγμένου
 καὶ φανερώς ἐπηρμένου
 810 γνούς ἀπολάψεις ὅτι πλείστον δύνασαι
 ταχέως· φιλεῖ γάρ πως τὰ τοι-
 αῦθ' ἐτέρᾳ τρέπεσθαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- οὔτοι μὰ τὴν Ὀμίχλην ἔτ' ἐνταυθοῖ μενεῖς,
 815 ἀλλ' ἔσθι' ἐλθὼν τοὺς Μεγακλέους κίονας.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ δαιμόνιε, τί χρῆμα πάσχεις, ὦ πάτερ;
 οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖς, μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν Ὀλύμπιον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἰδού γ' ἰδού Δί' Ὀλύμπιον. τῆς μωρίας·
 τὸν Δία νομίζειν ὄντα τηλικουτονί.

810 ἀπολάψεις a: ἀπολέψεις v.l. Σ^E S

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Look, he's well built and hard bodied, and the scion of Coesyra and her high flown line. But I'll go fetch him; and if he refuses, I'll throw him out of the house for sure. (*to Socrates*) Go inside and wait for me a little while.

CHORUS

(*to StrepsiaDES as he enters his house*)

Are you aware that soon
you will get a great many rewards
from us of the gods alone? For this man is ready
to do whatever you command.

(*to Socrates as he enters the Thinkery*)

And you, recognizing a man infatuated
and visibly keyed up,
will doubtless lap up as much as you can—
but quickly, for this sort of business has a way
of taking unexpected turns.

Enter STREPSIADES and PHIDIPIDES.

STREPSIADES

By Fog, you're not going to stay in this house a moment longer! Go and feed off Megacles' colonnade!

PHIDIPIDES

Good heavens, father, what's gotten into you? By Olympian Zeus, you're mentally ill.

STREPSIADES

Get a load of that! Olympian Zeus. What stupidity, believing in Zeus at your age!

ARISTOPHANES

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δὲ τοῦτ' ἐγέλασας ἐτεόν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

820

ἐνθυμούμενος

ὅτι παιδάριον εἶ καὶ φρονεῖς ἀρχαιϊκά.
ὅμως γε μὴν πρόσσελθ', ἵν' εἰδῇς πλείονα,
καί σοι φράσω τι πρᾶγμ' ὃ μαθὼν ἀνὴρ ἔσει.
ὅπως δὲ τοῦτο μὴ διδάξεις μηδένα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἰδοῦ. τί ἐστίν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

825

ᾧμοσας νυνὶ Δία.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔγωγ'.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὁρᾷς οὖν ὡς ἀγαθὸν τὸ μανθάνειν;
οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ Φειδιππίδη, Ζεύς.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλὰ τίς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

Δῖνος βασιλεύει τὸν Δί' ἐξεληλακώς.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

αἰβοῦ· τί ληρεῖς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἴσθι τοῦθ' οὕτως ἔχον.

CLOUDS

PHIDIPPIDES

And what's so funny about that?

STREPSIADES

Just marveling that a child like you has such old fashioned ideas. All the same, come over here if you want to broaden your knowledge, and I'll tell you a secret that'll make a man of you when you've learned it. But see that you don't share this lesson with anyone else.

PHIDIPPIDES

All right. What is it?

STREPSIADES

You swore just now by Zeus.

PHIDIPPIDES

I did.

STREPSIADES

Now do you see the high value of education? Phidippides, Zeus does not exist.

PHIDIPPIDES

Then who does?

STREPSIADES

Whirl is king, having kicked out Zeus.

PHIDIPPIDES

Psh, what's this drivel?

STREPSIADES

Believe me, that's how it is.

ARISTOPHANES

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τίς φησι ταῦτα;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

830

Σωκράτης ὁ Μήλιος
καὶ Χαιρεφῶν, ὅς οἶδε τὰ ψυλλῶν ἵχνη.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

σὺ δ' εἰς τοσοῦτον τῶν μανιῶν ἐλήλυθας
ὥστ' ἀνδράσιν πείθει χολῶσιν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εὐστόμει

835

καὶ μηδὲν εἵπης φλαῦρον ἄνδρας δεξιούς
καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντας, ὧν ὑπὸ τῆς φειδωλίας
ἀπεκείρατ' οὐδεὶς πώποτ' οὐδ' ἠλείψατο
οὐδ' εἰς βαλανεῖον ἦλθε λουσόμενος· σὺ δὲ
ὥσπερ τεθνεῶτος καταλόει μου τὸν βίον.
ἀλλ' ὥς τάχιστ' ἐλθὼν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ μάνθανε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

840

τί δ' ἂν παρ' ἐκείνων καὶ μάθοι χρηστόν τις ἄν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄληθες; ὅσαπέρ ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις σοφά.
γνώσει δὲ σαντὸν ὡς ἀμαθῆς εἶ καὶ παχύς.
ἀλλ' ἐπανάμεινόν μ' ὀλίγον ἐνταυθοῖ χρόνον.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

οἴμοι· τί δράσω παραφρονούντος τοῦ πατρός;

CLOUDS

PHIDIPPIDES

Who says so?

STREPSIADES

The Melian Socrates,⁶² and Chaerephon, connoisseur of flea footsteps.

PHIDIPPIDES

Are you so far gone in your insanity that you trust those bilious quacks?

STREPSIADES

Watch your mouth, and don't say anything disrespectful about sage and intelligent men, men so frugal that not one of them has ever cut his hair or anointed himself or gone to the bath house to wash; whereas you have been washing me out of house and home as if I were already dead! Now get a move on and take my place at school.

PHIDIPPIDES

But what's even worth learning from people like that?

STREPSIADES

Are you serious? Whatever wisdom human beings have! And you'll find out how ignorant and thick you really are. Just wait right here a moment.

STREPSIADES enters the Thinkery.

PHIDIPPIDES

Oh dear, what should I do? My father's off his rocker.

⁶² Strepsiades confuses Socrates with Diagoras of Melos, author of a sophistic proof of the nonexistence of the gods, who was outlawed by the Athenian Assembly around the time Aristophanes was revising *Clouds*.

ARISTOPHANES

845 πότερον παρανοίας αὐτὸν εἰσαγαγὼν ἔλω,
ἢ τοῖς σοροπηγοῖς τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ φράσω;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φέρ' ἴδω, σὺ τοῦτον τίνα νομίζεις; εἰπέ μοι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄλεκτρυνόνα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καλῶς γε. ταυτηνὶ δὲ τί;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄλεκτρυνόν'.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄμφω ταῦτό; καταγέλαστος εἶ.

850 μή νυν τὸ λοιπόν, ἀλλὰ τήνδε μὲν καλεῖν
ἄλεκτρύαιναν, τουτονὶ δ' ἀλέκτορα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄλεκτρύαιναν; ταῦτ' ἔμαθες τὰ δεξιὰ
εἶσω παρελθὼν ἄρτι παρὰ τοὺς γηγενεῖς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

855 χᾶτερά γε πόλλ'. ἀλλ' ὅ τι μάθοιμ' ἐκάστοτε
ἐπελανθανόμην ἂν εὐθὺς ὑπὸ πλῆθους ἐτῶν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ θοῖμάτιον ἀπώλεσας;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολώλεκ', ἀλλὰ καταπεφρόντικα.

CLOUDS

Should I take him to court and have him certified insane,
or report his madness to the coffin makers?

Reenter STREPSIADES with a Slave carrying a pair of fowls.

STREPSIADES

All right, look: what do you call this? Speak up.

PHIDIPPIDES

A fowl.

STREPSIADES

Good. And this?

PHIDIPPIDES

A fowl.

STREPSIADES

The same for both? You make me laugh! You'd better stop
doing that; call this one here a fowl, this one here a fowless.

PHIDIPPIDES

Fowless? Is this the kind of ingenuity you've learned in
your recent sojourn with that scum of the earth?

STREPSIADES

That and lots more. But every lesson I learned I forgot
right away because I'm too old.

PHIDIPPIDES

I guess that's also why you've lost your cloak.

STREPSIADES

It's not lost, merely sublimated.

ARISTOPHANES

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τὰς δ' ἐμβάδας ποῖ τέτροφας, ὦ νότη σύ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὥσπερ Περικλῆς, εἰς τὸ δέον ἀπώλεσα.
860 ἀλλ' ἴθι, βάδιζ', ἴωμεν. εἴτα τῷ πατρὶ
πιθόμενος ἐξάμαρτε. καὶ γὰρ τοι ποτὲ
οἶδ' ἐξέτει σοι τραυλίσαντι πιθόμενος.
ὄν πρῶτον ὀβολὸν ἔλαβον ἡλιαστικόν,
τούτου ᾧ πριάμην σοι Διασίοις ἀμαξίδα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

865 ἦ μὴν σὺν τούτοις τῷ χρόνῳ ποτ' ἀχθέσει.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εὖ γ' ὅτι ἐπείσθης. δεῦρο δεῦρ' ὦ Σώκρατες,
ἔξελθ'. ἄγω γὰρ σοι τὸν υἱὸν τουτονὶ
ἄκοντ' ἀναπείσας.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

νηπύτιος γὰρ ἐστ' ἔτι
καὶ τῶν κρεμαστῶν οὐ τρίβων τῶν ἐνθάδε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

870 αὐτὸς τρίβων εἷης ἄν, εἰ κρέμαιό γε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ εἰς κόρακας; καταρᾶ σὺν τῷ διδασκάλῳ;

CLOUDS

PHIDIPPIDES

And what have you done with your shoes, you idiot?

STREPSIADES

As Pericles put it, "I've expended them as required."⁶³ But come on, get moving, let's go. Be bad if only to humor your father. I know I've done the same for you, remember? When you were a lisping six-year-old, the very first obol of jury pay I earned I spent on a toy cart for you at the Diasia.⁶⁴

PHIDIPPIDES

You'll live to regret this, just mark my words!

STREPSIADES

Good for you, you listened to me! Come out here, come out, Socrates! I've brought this son of mine; I persuaded him against his wishes.

Enter SOCRATES.

SOCRATES

But this one's still a baby, and doesn't know the ropes in a place like this.

PHIDIPPIDES

You learn the ropes: go and hang yourself!

STREPSIADES

Damn you, how dare you curse your teacher?

⁶³ Pericles' public explanation of a suspicious expenditure of ten talents during the Euboean campaign of 445; cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 23.

⁶⁴ See 408 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἰδοὺν κρέμαι· ὥς ἡλίθιον ἐφθέγγατο
καὶ τοῖσι χεῖλεσιν διερρυνήκοσιν.
πῶς ἂν μάθοι ποθ' οὗτος ἀπόφενξιν δίκης
875 ἧ κλήσιν ἧ χαύνωσιν ἀναπειστηρίαν;
καίτοι ταλάντου τοῦτ' ἔμαθεν Ὑπέρβολος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀμέλει δίδασκε. θυμόσοφός ἐστιν φύσει.
εὐθύς γε τοι παιδάριον ὃν τυννουτονὶ
ἐπλαττεν ἔνδον οἰκίας ναῦς τ' ἐγλυφεν
880 ἀμαξίδας τε συκίνας ἡργάζετο
κακ τῶν σιδίων βατράχους ἐποίει, πῶς δοκεῖς;
ὅπως δ' ἐκείνῳ τῷ λόγῳ μαθήσεται,
τὸν κρείττον', ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα,
ὃς τᾶδिका λέγων ἀνατρέπει τὸν κρείττονα·
885 εἰ δὲ μή, τὸν γοῦν ἄδικον πάσῃ τέχνῃ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς μαθήσεται παρ' αὐτοῖν τοῖν λόγοιν·
ἐγὼ δ' ἀπέσομαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοῦτό νυν μέμνησ', ὅπως
πρὸς πάντα τὰ δίκαι' ἀντιλέγειν δυνήσεται.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

χώρει δευρί· δεῖξον σαυτὸν
890 τοῖσι θεαταῖς καίπερ θρασὺς ὢν.

⁸⁸⁰ συκίνας Naber: σκυτίνας a

CLOUDS

SOCRATES

You hear how he said "wopes"? How babyish, with his lips all slack! How could this one ever learn courtroom defence, or summoning, or effective bamboozling? But then again, Hyperbolus managed to learn them, for a very high fee.

STREPSIADES

Never mind, just teach him. He's a born philosopher at heart. Why, when he was still a tyke this high, he could make clay houses at home, and carve boats, and fashion figwood carts, and he'd make frogs out of pomegranates as pretty as you please. Just see that he learns that pair of Arguments, the Better, whatever that may be, and the Worse, the one that pleads what's wrong and overturns the Better. And if not both, by all means teach him at least the Worse!

SOCRATES

He'll be taught by the Arguments themselves; I'll be elsewhere.

STREPSIADES

Just remember this: see that he's able to counter all just claims!

Exit SOCRATES; enter BETTER ARGUMENT.

BETTER ARGUMENT

Come out here, exhibit yourself to the spectators, though you need no encouragement to show off.

Enter WORSE ARGUMENT.

ARISTOPHANES

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἴθ' ὅποι χρήζεις· πολὺ γὰρ μάλλον σ'
ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖσι λέγων ἀπολῶ.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀπολείς σύ; τίς ὢν;

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

λόγος.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἥττων γ' ὢν.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀλλά σε νικῶ τὸν ἐμοῦ κρείττω
φάσκοντ' εἶναι.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

895 τί σοφὸν ποιῶν;

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

γνώμας καινὰς ἐξευρίσκων.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ταῦτα γὰρ ἀνθεὶ διὰ τουτουσὶ
τοὺς ἀνοήτους.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ σοφούς.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀπολῶ σε κακῶς.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

εἰπέ, τί ποιῶν;

CLOUDS

WORSE ARGUMENT

You go wherever you like: speaking before a crowd I'll destroy you much more effectively.

BETTER ARGUMENT

You destroy me? Who do you think you are?

WORSE ARGUMENT

An Argument.

BETTER ARGUMENT

Yes, but a Worse one.

WORSE ARGUMENT

But I'll defeat you despite your claim to be Better than me.

BETTER ARGUMENT

With what smart maneuver?

WORSE ARGUMENT

By inventing novel ideas.

BETTER ARGUMENT

That's certainly in vogue, thanks to these idiots (*indicating the spectators*).

WORSE ARGUMENT

Not idiots; they're smart.

BETTER ARGUMENT

I'll utterly destroy you.

WORSE ARGUMENT

How will you do that, pray tell?

ARISTOPHANES

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

900 τὰ δίκαια λέγων.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀνατρέψω ταῦτ' ἀντιλέγων·
οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶναι πάνυ φημι Δίκην.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

οὐκ εἶναι φής;

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

φέρε γάρ, ποῦ ᾽στίν;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

παρὰ τοῖσι θεοῖς.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

905 πῶς δῆτα Δίκης οὔσης ὁ Ζεὺς
οὐκ ἀπόλωλεν τὸν πατέρ' αὐτοῦ
δήσας;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

αἰβοῖ, τουτὶ καὶ δὴ
χωρεῖ τὸ κακόν. δότε μοι λεκάνην.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τυφογέρων εἰ κανάρμοστος.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

καταπύγων εἰ καναίσχυντος.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ρόδα μ' εἴρηκας.

CLOUDS

BETTER ARGUMENT

By pleading a just case.

WORSE ARGUMENT

But I'll upend it in rebuttal, for I flatly deny the existence of justice.

BETTER ARGUMENT

You deny its existence?

WORSE ARGUMENT

Well then, where is it?

BETTER ARGUMENT

With the gods.

WORSE ARGUMENT

If that's where justice is, then how come Zeus hasn't been destroyed for chaining up his own father?

BETTER ARGUMENT

Yuk, this vileness is going too far. Give me a puke pan!

WORSE ARGUMENT

You're an outmoded old blowhard.

BETTER ARGUMENT

You're a shameless faggot!

WORSE ARGUMENT

A rosy compliment!

ARISTOPHANES

910 Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
καὶ βωμολόχος.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
κρίνεσι στεφανοῖς.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
καὶ πατραλοίας.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
χρυσῶ πάττων μ' οὐ γιγνώσκεις.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
οὐ δῆτα πρὸ τοῦ γ', ἀλλὰ μολύβδῳ.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
νῦν δέ γε κόσμος τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐμοί.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
θρασὺς εἶ πολλοῦ.

915 Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
σὺ δέ γ' ἀρχαῖος.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
διὰ σέ δὲ φοιτᾶν
οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει τῶν μειρακίων.
καὶ γνωσθήσει ποτ' Ἀθηναίοις
οἷα διδάσκεις τοὺς ἀνοήτους.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
αὐχμείς αἰσχροῶς.

920 Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ
σὺ δέ γ' εὖ πράττεις.

CLOUDS

BETTER ARGUMENT

And a clown!

WORSE ARGUMENT

A lily crown!

BETTER ARGUMENT

And a parricide!

WORSE ARGUMENT

You don't realize that you're sprinkling me with gold.

BETTER ARGUMENT

In the old days these words weren't gold but lead.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Nowadays I regard them as a badge of honor.

BETTER ARGUMENT

You're pretty brazen.

WORSE ARGUMENT

And you're pretty antique.

BETTER ARGUMENT

It's your fault that none of the younger generation wants to go to school, and one day the Athenians will realize what sort of education you've been giving the idiots!

WORSE ARGUMENT

You're disgustingly seedy.

BETTER ARGUMENT

And you're prospering, though you used to go begging,

ARISTOPHANES

καίτοι πρότερόν γ' ἐπτώχενες,
Τήλεφος εἶναι Μυσὸς φάσκων
ἐκ πηριδίου
γνώμας τρώγων Πανδελετείους.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ὦμοι σοφίας—

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

925 ὦμοι μανίας—

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ῆς ἐμνήσθης.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τῆς σῆς πόλεως θ'
ἥτις σε τρέφει
λυμαινόμενον τοῖς μειρακίοις.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

οὐχὶ διδάξεις τοῦτον Κρόνος ὦν.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

930 εἴπερ γ' αὐτὸν σωθῆναι χρὴ
καὶ μὴ λαλιὰν μόνον ἀσκῆσαι.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

δεῦρ' ἴθι, τοῦτον δ' ἔα μαίνεσθαι.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

κλαύσει, τὴν χεῖρ' ἣν ἐπιβάλλης.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

παύσασθε μάχης καὶ λαιδορίας.

CLOUDS

claiming to be the Mysian Telephus and living on Pendeletean *bon mots* from a little bag.⁶⁵

WORSE ARGUMENT

My, the cleverness—

BETTER ARGUMENT

My, the craziness—

WORSE ARGUMENT

—of your allusion!

BETTER ARGUMENT

—of you, and of the polis that supports you while you defile its younger generation!

WORSE ARGUMENT

You won't be this boy's teacher, Cronus⁶⁶ that you are!

BETTER ARGUMENT

Oh yes I will, if he's to be kept safe and not coached exclusively in drivel.

WORSE ARGUMENT

(to *Phidippides*) Come this way and let him rave on.

BETTER ARGUMENT

You'll be sorry if you lay a hand on him!

CHORUS LEADER

Stop your scrapping and name calling. Rather make a pres-

⁶⁵ The hero of Euripides' *Telephus* (extensively parodied in *Acharnians*) disguised himself as a beggar to plead his own case. Pendeletus, mentioned elsewhere only in Cratinus' *Cheirons* (fr. 260, ante 429), is said by the scholiast to have been a politician and a predatory prosecutor.

⁶⁶ See 398 n.

ARISTOPHANES

935 ἀλλ' ἐπιδειξαι σύ τε τοὺς προτέρους
 ἄττ' ἐδίδασκες, σύ τε τὴν καινὴν
 παίδευσιν, ὅπως ἂν ἀκούσας σφῶν
 ἀντιλεγόντοιν κρίνας φοιτᾷ.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

δρᾶν ταῦτ' ἐθέλω.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

κᾶγωγ' ἐθέλω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

940 φέρε δὴ, πότερος λέξει πρότερος;

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τούτῳ δώσω·

κᾷτ' ἐκ τούτων ὧν ἂν λέξῃ

ῥηματίοισιν καινοῖς αὐτὸν

καὶ διανοίαις κατατοξεύσω,

945 τὸ τελευταῖον δ', ἣν ἀναγρύζῃ,

τὸ πρόσωπον ἅπαν καὶ τῷ φθαλμῷ

κεντούμενος ὥσπερ ὑπ' ἀνθρηνῶν

ὑπὸ τῶν γνωμῶν ἀπολεῖται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) νῦν δείξετον τὸ πισύνω

950 τοῖς περιδεξίοισιν

λόγοισι καὶ φροντίσι καὶ

γνωμοτύποις μερίμναις

ὁπότερος αὐτοῖν ἀμεί-

νων λέγων φανήσεται.

CLOUDS

entation: you describe how you used to teach our forebears, and you, the new education. That way the boy will hear both sides of the case and go to the school of his choice.

BETTER ARGUMENT

I'm willing to do that.

WORSE ARGUMENT

So am I.

CHORUS LEADER

Excellent. Who will speak first?

WORSE ARGUMENT

I'll give him openers; and then, whatever arguments he's made, I'll shoot him down with novel phraselets and conceptions; and in the end, if he so much as mutters, he'll get his whole face and both eyes stung by debating points like hornets, and so perish.

CHORUS

Now these two will demonstrate—
relying on superior dexterity
in argument, and intellectuality,
and maxim-minting ingenuity,
—which of them, by what he says,
will reveal himself the better man.

954 φανήσεται] γενήσεται V

- 955 νῦν γὰρ ἅπας ἐνθάδε κίν-
 δυνος ἀνείται σοφίας,
 ἥς πέρι τοῖς ἐμοῖς φίλοις
 ἐστὶν ἀγὼν μέγιστος.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- ἀλλ' ὦ πολλοῖς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἤθεσι χρηστοῖς
 στεφανώσας,
 960 ῥῆξον φωνὴν ἥτινι χαίρεις καὶ τὴν σαντοῦ φύσιν
 εἰπέ.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

- λέξω τοίνυν τὴν ἀρχαίαν παιδείαν ὡς διέκειτο,
 ὅτ' ἐγὼ τὰ δίκαια λέγων ἤνθουν καὶ σωφροσύνη
 ὑενόμιστο.
 πρῶτον μὲν ἔδει παιδὸς φωνὴν γρύξαντος μηδέν'
 ἀκοῦσαι
 εἶτα βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς εὐτάκτως εἰς κιθαρισ-
 τοῦ
 965 τοὺς κωμῆτας γυμνοὺς ἀθρόους, κεῖ κριμνώδη
 καταναίφοι.
 εἶτ' αὖ προμαθεῖν ᾄσμ' ἐδίδασκεν τῷ μηρῷ μὴ
 ξυνέχοντας,
 ἢ "Παλλάδα περσέπολιν δεινάν" ἢ "τηλέπορόν τι
 βόαμα",
 ἐντειναμένους τὴν ἀρμονίαν ἣν οἱ πατέρες παρέδω-
 καν.
 969 εἰ δέ τις αὐτῶν βωμολοχεύσασαί ἢ κάμψειεν τινα
 καμπήν

CLOUDS

For here and now
wisdom is wagered on one roll of the dice;
to control it is for my friends
the supreme showdown.

CHORUS LEADER

You crowned the older generation with many good traits
of character; now break out whatever speech is dear to your
heart and tell us your own nature.

BETTER ARGUMENT

Very well, I shall describe how the old education used to
operate in the days when I flourished by propounding
what's right, and when decency was accepted custom. The
first rule was that not a sound, not even a mutter, should
be heard from a boy. Furthermore, the boys of each neigh-
borhood had to walk through the streets to the music mas-
ter's all together and in good order, without coats even if
the snow was coming down like chaff. Then he would teach
them to memorize a song—while keeping their thighs
apart!—"Pallas, Dire City Sacker," or "A Cry Sounds From
Afar," and to tune their voices to the mode their fathers
handed down. And if any of them clowned around or
jazzed up the song with the sort of riff today's singers put

- 971 οἷας οἱ νῦν, τὰς κατὰ Φρύνιν ταύτας τὰς δυσκολο-
κάμπτους,
ἐπετρίβετο τυπτόμενος πολλὰς ὥς τὰς Μούσας
ἀφανίζων.
ἐν παιδοτρίβου δὲ καθίζοντας τὸν μηρὸν ἔδει προ-
βαλέσθαι
τοὺς παῖδας, ὅπως τοῖς ἔξωθεν μηδὲν δείξειαν
ἀπηνές·
- 975 εἴτ' αὖ πάλιν αὖθις ἀνιστάμενον συμψῆσαι καὶ προ-
νοεῖσθαι
εἰδῶλον τοῖσιν ἐρασταῖσιν τῆς ἡβης μὴ
καταλείπειν.
ἡλείψατο δ' ἂν τοῦμφαλοῦ οὐδεὶς παῖς ὑπένερθεν
τότ' ἄν, ὥστε
τοῖς αἰδοίοισι δρόσος καὶ χνοῦς ὥσπερ μήλοισιν
ἐπήνθει.
οὐδ' ἂν μαλακὴν φυρασάμενος τὴν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν
ἐραστὴν
- 980 αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν προαγωγεύων τοῖν ὀφθαλμοῖν ἐβάδιζεν.
οὐδ' ἀνελέσθαι δειπνοῦντ' ἐξῆν κεφάλαιον τῆς
ῥαφανίδος,
οὐδ' ἄνηθον τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀρπάζειν οὐδὲ σέλι-
νον,
οὐδ' ὀψοφαγεῖν οὐδὲ κιχλίζειν οὐδ' ἴσχειν τὸ πόδ'
ἐναλλάξ.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀρχαῖά γε καὶ Διπολιώδη καὶ τεττίγων ἀνάμεστα

CLOUDS

in, these irritating ruffles in the style of Phrynis,⁶⁷ he'd get a hiding, with plenty of lashes laid on for effacing the Muses. At the trainer's the boys had to cross their thighs when sitting, so they wouldn't reveal anything that would torment the onlookers; and when they stood up again, they had to smooth the sand and take care not to leave behind an image of their pubescence for their lovers to find. And in those days, no boy would oil himself below the navel, and so his privates bloomed with dewy down like apricots. Nor would he liquefy his voice to a simper for his lover and walk around pimping for himself with his eyes. At dinner he wasn't allowed to help himself to a head of radish, or to snatch his elders' dill or celery, or to eat the tasty tidbits, or giggle, or sit with his legs crossed.

WORSE ARGUMENT

How antiquated, how like the *Dipolieia*, how chock full of

⁶⁷ This citharode from Mantinea won the Panathenaic prize in 456/5 and was an important figure in the development of the new music of Aristophanes' day; cf. Pherecrates fr. 155.14 ff.

⁹⁷⁰ versum e S χ 296 intulit Brunck

καὶ Κηδείδου καὶ Βουφονίων.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

- 985 ἄλλ' οὖν ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐκείνα
 ἐξ ὧν ἄνδρας Μαραθωνομάχας ἡμῇ παιδείευσις
 ἔθρεψεν.
 σὺ δὲ τοὺς νῦν εὐθὺς ἐν ἱματίοισι διδάσκεις ἐντετυ-
 λίχθαι,
 ὥστε μ' ἀπάγχεσθ' ὅταν ὀρχεῖσθαι Παναθηναίοις
 δέον αὐτοὺς
 τὴν ἀσπίδα τῆς κωλῆς προέχων ἀμελῇ τις Τριτο-
 γενεΐης.
 990 πρὸς ταῦτ', ὦ μειράκιον, θαρρῶν ἐμὲ τὸν κρείττω
 λόγον αἰροῦ.
 κάπιστήσῃ μισεῖν ἀγορὰν καὶ βαλανείων ἀπέχεσθαι,
 καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς αἰσχύνεσθαι καὶ σκώπτῃ τίς σε
 φλέγεσθαι,
 καὶ τῶν θάκων τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ὑπανίστασθαι
 προσιοῦσιν,
 καὶ μὴ περὶ τοὺς σαυτοῦ γονέας σκαιουργεῖν, ἄλλο
 τε μὴδὲν
 995 αἰσchrὸν ποιεῖν οὐ τῆς Αἰδοῦς μέλλεις τᾶγα μ' ἀνα-
 πλήσειν,
 μὴδ' εἰς ὀρχηστρίδος εἰσάττειν, ἵνα μὴ πρὸς ταῦτα
 κεχηνῶς
 μήλω βληθεὶς ὑπὸ πορνιδίου τῆς εὐκλείας ἀπο-
 θραυσθῆς,

CLOUDS

cicadas and Cedides and the slaughter of the ox!⁶⁸

BETTER ARGUMENT

But on precisely those foundations my education bred the men who fought at Marathon, whereas you teach the men of today to spend their lives muffled in cloaks; and so I choke with rage when they're supposed to be dancing at the Panathenaea⁶⁹ and one of them's holding his shield in front of his haunch with no regard for Tritogeneia!⁷⁰ Accordingly, my boy, boldly opt for me, the Better Argument, and you will learn how to hate the agora and steer clear of bath houses; to feel shame at what is shameful and flare at anyone who mocks you; to offer your seats to your elders when they approach; not to behave rudely towards your own parents, or do anything else disgraceful that might infect the image of Modesty; not to burst into a dancing girl's house, lest while you're gaping after that sort of thing you're struck by a little whore's apple and get your fair name fractured; and never to talk back to your father, or

⁶⁸ The Dipolieia, with its ox sacrifice, honored Zeus Polieus; Cedides (var. Cecides; cf. Cratinus fr. 168) was an early dithyrambist; for the cicadas see *Knights* 1331.

⁶⁹ In this martial dance (*pyrriche*), performed naked, the shield was supposed to be held high and moved vigorously.

⁷⁰ A formal epithet of Athena.

985 Kηδ- Π2 SV cf. IG I² 770: Kηκ- a

995 οῦ Henderson: ὄ τι a

ARISTOPHANES

μηδ' ἀντειπεῖν τῷ πατρὶ μηδὲν μηδ' Ἰαπετὸν
καλέσαντα
μνησικακῆσαι τὴν ἡλικίαν ἐξ ἧς ἐνεοττοτροφήθης.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

1000 εἰ ταῦτ', ὦ μειράκιον, πείσει τούτῳ, νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον
τοῖς Ἰπποκράτους υἱέσιν εἵξεις καὶ σε καλοῦσι βλι-
τομάμμαν.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν λιπαρός γε καὶ εὐανθῆς ἐν γυμνασίοις δια-
τρίψεις,
οὐ στωμύλλων κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν τριβολεκτράπελ',
οἰάπερ οἱ νῦν,
οὐδ' ἐλκόμενος περὶ πραγματίου γλισχραντιλο-
γεξεπιτρίπτου,
1005 ἀλλ' εἰς Ἀκαδήμειαν κατιῶν ὑπὸ ταῖς μορίαις ἀπο-
θρέξει
στεφανωσάμενος καλάμῳ λευκῷ μετὰ σῶφρονος
ἡλικιώτου,
σμύλακος ὄζων καὶ ἀπραγμοσύνης καὶ λεύκης φυλ-
λοβολούσης,
ἦρος ἐν ὥρᾳ, χαίρων ὁπότεν πλάτανος πτελέα ψιθυ-
ρίζῃ.
ἦν ταῦτα ποιῆς ἀγὼ φράζω
1010 καὶ πρὸς τούτοις προσέχῃς τὸν νοῦν
εἵξεις ἀεὶ
στήθος λιπαρόν, χροιάν λαμπράν,
ὧμους μεγάλους, γλῶτταν βαιάν,

CLOUDS

by calling him Iapetus⁷¹ speak scornfully of his years, many of which he spent on your fledging.

WORSE ARGUMENT

My boy, if you listen to his advice, by Dionysus you'll be just like Hippocrates' sons,⁷² and people will call you a clodhopper.

BETTER ARGUMENT

No, you'll be hale and glistening and pass your days in gymnasia, not in the agora chattering about the thorny subjects currently in vogue, or being dragged into court about some trifling, obstinacious, disputatious, ruinatious case. No, down to the Academy⁷³ you shall go, and under the sacred olive trees you shall crown yourself with white reed and have a race with a decent boy your own age, fragrant with woodbine and carefree content, and the catkins flung by the poplar tree, luxuriating in spring's hour, when the plane tree whispers to the elm.

If you follow my recommendations,
and keep them ever in mind,
you will always have a rippling chest, radiant skin,
broad shoulders, a wee tongue,

⁷¹ The brother of Cronus, cf. 398 n.

⁷² Hippocrates, nephew of Pericles, was killed at Delium in 424; his three sons (Demophon, Pericles, and Telesippus) are ridiculed elsewhere in comedy as being swinish and uneducated.

⁷³ A public park with sporting facilities, and later the site of Plato's school.

- 1015 πυγὴν μεγάλην, πόσθην μικράν·
 ἦν δ' ἄπερ οἱ νῦν ἐπιτηδεύης,
 πρῶτα μὲν ἕξεις
 στῆθος λεπτόν, χροιάν ὠχράν,
 ὤμους μικρούς, γλῶτταν μεγάλην,
 1020 πυγὴν μικράν, ψήφισμα μακρόν·
 καί σ' ἀναπείσει τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν ἅπαν
 καλὸν ἡγεῖσθαι, τὸ καλὸν δ' αἰσχρόν,
 καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τῆς Ἀντιμάχου
 καταπυγოსύνης ἀναπλήσει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) ὦ καλλίπυργον σοφίαν
 1025 κλεινοτάτην ἐπασκῶν,
 ὡς ἡδύ σου τοῖσι λόγοις
 σῶφρον ἔπεστιν ἄνθος.
 εὐδαίμονές γ' ἦσαν ἄρ' οἱ
 ζῶντες ἐπὶ Κρόνου τότε.
 1030 πρὸς τάδε σ', ὦ κομψοπρεπεῇ μουσαν ἔχων,
 δεῖ σε λέγειν τι καινόν, ὥς
 ἠὺδοκίμηκεν ἀνὴρ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 1035 δεινῶν δέ σοι βουλευμάτων ἔοικε δεῖν πρὸς αὐτόν,
 εἴπερ τὸν ἄνδρ' ὑπερβαλεῖ καὶ μὴ γέλωτ' ὀφλήσεις.

1017-18 στῆθος . . . χροιάν . . . ὤμους Bücheler: χροιάν
 . . . ὤμους . . . στῆθος a

1019 κωλὴν μεγάλην post μικράν del. Austin

1029 ἐπὶ Κρόνου τότε Zimmermann: τότ' ἐπὶ τῶν προ-
 τέρων a

CLOUDS

a grand rump and a petite dick.
But if you adopt current practices,
you'll start by having
a puny chest, pasty skin,
narrow shoulders, a grand tongue,
a wee rump and a lengthy edict. And he will
persuade you
to consider all that's foul fair,
and fair foul,
and furthermore he'll infect you
with Antimachus' faggotry.⁷⁴

CHORUS

Ah, you who practice wisdom
towering and preeminent,
how sweet upon your words
is decency's flower!
The people living
in that age of Cronus⁷⁵ really were fortunate.
(*to Worse Argument*)

To rebut this, you with your speciously stylish muse
will have to make a truly original speech,
since your opponent has distinguished himself.

CHORUS LEADER

Apparently you'll need some impressive schemes to
counter him, if you mean to overthrow your man and avoid
humiliation.

⁷⁴ According to the scholiast, not the Antimachus of *Acharni-ans* 1150 ff.; correctly, if this is a man of Phidippides' generation.

⁷⁵ See 398 n.

ARISTOPHANES

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

καὶ μὴν πάλαι ἔγὼ ἔπνιγόμην τὰ σπλάγχνα κάπεθύ-
μον

ἅπαντα ταῦτ' ἐναντίαις γνώμασι συνταράξαι.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἥττων μὲν λόγος δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἐκλήθην
ἐν τοῖσι φροντισταῖσιν, ὅτι πρῶτιστος ἐπενόησα
1040 τοῖσιν νόμοις καὶ ταῖς δίκαις τὰναντί' ἀντιλέξαι.
καὶ τοῦτο πλεῖν ἢ μυρίων ἔστ' ἄξιον στατήρων,
αἰρούμενον τοὺς ἥττονας λόγους ἔπειτα νικᾶν.
σκέψαι δὲ τὴν παίδευσιν ἣ πέποιθεν, ὡς ἐλέγξω,
ὅστις σε θερμῷ φησὶ λούσθαι πρῶτον οὐκ ἑάσειν.
1045 καίτοι τίνα γνώμην ἔχων ψέγεις τὰ θερμὰ λουτρά;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ὅτιῃ κάκιστόν ἐστι καὶ δειλὸν ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἐπίσχε· εὐθὺς γάρ σε μέσον ἔχω λαβὼν ἄφυκτον.
καί μοι φράσον· τῶν τοῦ Διὸς παίδων τίν' ἄνδρ'
ἄριστον

ψυχὴν νομίζεις, εἰπέ, καὶ πλείστους πόνους πονῆσαι;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

1050 ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν' Ἡρακλέους βελτίον' ἄνδρα κρίνω.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ποῦ ψυχρὰ δῆτα πάποτ' εἶδες Ἡράκλεια λουτρά;
καίτοι τίς ἀνδρείότερος ἦν;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ταῦτ' ἐστί, ταῦτ', ἐκεῖνα

CLOUDS

WORSE ARGUMENT

Actually, I've had a cramp in my guts for quite a while now, longing to trash all of his arguments with considered refutations. For this very reason I've earned the name Worse Argument in intellectual circles, because I pioneered the idea of arguing what's contrary to established principles of justice. (*to Phidippides*) And it'll repay you more money than you can count, this ability to adopt the worse arguments and yet win. Observe how I cross examine the education he believes in. First, he forbids you to bathe in hot water. (*to Better Argument*) Now what's your reason for scorning hot baths?

BETTER ARGUMENT

Because they're utterly bad and turn a man into a coward.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Stop right there! I've already got you in an unbreakable hammerlock. Pray tell me which of Zeus' sons you consider the heartiest he-man and the doer of the doughtiest deeds? Speak up.

BETTER ARGUMENT

In my opinion, no hero outclasses Heracles.

WORSE ARGUMENT

But where have you ever seen Heracleian *cold* baths?⁷⁶ And yet who was ever manlier?

BETTER ARGUMENT

That there, that's just the sort of thing the teenagers spend

⁷⁶ Hot springs were associated with Heracles.

ARISTOPHANES

ἂ τῶν νεανίσκων ἀεὶ δι' ἡμέρας λαλούντων
 πλήρες τὸ βαλανεῖον ποιεῖ, κενὰς δὲ τὰς
 παλαίστρας.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

- 1055 εἴτ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ τὴν διατριβὴν ψέγεις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐπαινῶ.
 εἰ γὰρ ποιηρὸν ἦν, Ὅμηρος οὐδέποτ' ἂν ἐποίει
 τὸν Νέστορ' ἀγορητὴν ἄν, οὐδὲ τοὺς σοφοὺς ἅπαντας.
 ἄνεμι δῆτ' ἐντεῦθεν εἰς τὴν γλῶτταν, ἣν ὁδὸν μὲν
 οὗ φησι χρῆναι τοὺς νέους ἀσκεῖν, ἐγὼ δέ φημι.
- 1060 καὶ σωφρονεῖν αὖ φησὶ χρῆναι, δύο κακῶ μεγίστω.
 ἐπεὶ σὺν διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν τῷ πάποτ' εἶδες ἤδη
 ἀγαθόν τι γενόμενον; φράσον, καὶ μ' ἐξέλεγξον εἰπών.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

πολλοῖς. ὁ γοῦν Πηλεὺς ἔλαβε διὰ τοῦτο τὴν μάχαι-
 ραν.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

- μάχαιραν; ἀστείον γε κέρδος ἔλαβεν ὁ κακοδαίμων.
- 1065 Ὑπέρβολος δ' οὐκ τῶν λύχνων πλεῖν ἢ τάλαντα
 πολλὰ
 εἵληφε διὰ ποιηρίαν, ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐ μάχαιραν.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

καὶ τὴν Θέτιν γ' ἔγημε διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν ὁ Πηλεὺς.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

καῖτ' ἀπολιποῦσά γ' αὐτὸν ὥχετ'. οὐ γὰρ ἦν
 ὑβριστὴς
 οὐδ' ἡδὺς ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν τὴν νύκτα παννυχίζειν.

CLOUDS

day after day chattering about, that fills up the bath house and empties the wrestling schools!

WORSE ARGUMENT

Then you scorn time spent in the agora, while I encourage it. If it were something bad, Homer would never have called Nestor, and every other sagacious person, "man of the agora."⁷⁷ That brings me to the question of the tongue, which according to my opponent young men should not exercise. I say they should. And again, he says they should be decent. That makes two very bad principles. Have you ever seen anyone get anything good by being decent?

BETTER ARGUMENT

Lots of people. Peleus, for one, got his knife that way.⁷⁸

WORSE ARGUMENT

A knife? What a civilized reward the poor sucker got! Now Hyperbolus, the man from the lamp market, has made a vast amount of money by being a rascal, but never a knife, no indeed!

BETTER ARGUMENT

And Peleus got to marry Thetis by being decent.

WORSE ARGUMENT

And then she up and deserted him because he wasn't a roughneck, and no fun to spend the night with between

⁷⁷ In the Homeric poems agora meant not "market" or "downtown" (as in Aristophanes' day) but "place of assembly."

⁷⁸ Acastus' wife propositioned Achilles' father Peleus; when he refused her she accused him of attempted rape. Acastus abandoned him to the animals in the forest, but the gods gave him a knife to defend himself.

ARISTOPHANES

1070 γυνή δὲ σιναμωρουμένη χαίρει. σὺ δ' εἰ Κρόνιππος.
σκέψαι γάρ, ὦ μειράκιον, ἐν τῷ σωφρονεῖν ἅπαντα
ἄνεστιν, ἡδονῶν θ' ὅσων μέλλεις ἀποστερεῖσθαι
παίδων, γυναικῶν, κοττάβων, ὄψων, πότων, καχασ-
μῶν.

καίτοι τί σοι ζῆν ἄξιον, τούτων ἂν στερηθῆς;
1075 εἶέν. πάρειμ' ἐντεῦθεν εἰς τὰς τῆς φύσεως ἀνάγκας.
ἡμαρτες, ἡράσθης, ἐμοίχευσάς τι, κατ' ἐλήφθης.
ἀπόλωλας· ἀδύνατος γὰρ εἰ λέγειν. ἐμοὶ δ' ὁμιλῶν
χρῶ τῇ φύσει, σκίρτα, γέλα, νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν.
μοιχὸς γὰρ ἦν τύχης ἀλούς, τὰδ' ἀντερεῖς πρὸς
αὐτόν,

1080 ὥς οὐδὲν ἡδίκηκας· εἴτ' εἰς τὸν Δί' ἐπανενεγκεῖν,
κακείνος ὥς ἥττων ἔρωτός ἐστι καὶ γυναικῶν
καίτοι σὺ θνητὸς ὢν θεοῦ πῶς μείζον ἂν δύναιο;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί δ' ἦν ραφανιδωθῇ πιθόμενός σοι τέφρα τε τιλθῇ;
ἔξει τινὰ γνώμην λέγειν τὸ μὴ εὐρύπρωκτος εἶναι;

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

1085 ἦν δ' εὐρύπρωκτος ἦ, τί πείσεται κακόν;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί μὲν οὖν ἂν ἔτι μείζον πάθοι τούτου ποτέ;

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἐρεῖς, ἦν τοῦτο νικηθῆς ἐμοῦ;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

σιγήσομαι. τί δ' ἄλλο;

CLOUDS

the sheets. A woman enjoys being lewdly used. But you're just a king-sized Cronus.⁷⁹ My boy, do consider everything that decency entails, and all the pleasures you stand to lose: boys, women, dice, fine food and drink, laughs. If you're deprived of all this, what's the point of living? Now then, I'll proceed to the necessities of nature. Say you slip up, fall in love, engage in a little adultery, and then get caught. You're done for because you're unable to argue. But if you follow me, go ahead and indulge your nature, romp, laugh, think nothing shameful. If you happen to get caught *in flagrante*, tell him this: that you've done nothing wrong. Then pass the buck to Zeus, on the grounds that even he is worsted by lust for women, so how can you, a mere mortal, be stronger than a god?

BETTER ARGUMENT

But say he listens to you and then gets violated with a radish and depilated with hot ash?⁸⁰ What line of argument will he have on hand to avoid becoming wide-arsed?

WORSE ARGUMENT

And if he does become wide-arsed, what's the harm in that?

BETTER ARGUMENT

You mean, what harm could ever be worse than that?

WORSE ARGUMENT

All right, what will you say if I defeat you on this point?

BETTER ARGUMENT

I'll shut up; what else could I do?

⁷⁹ See 398 n.

⁸⁰ A form of vengeance legally available to cuckolded men.

ARISTOPHANES

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

φέρει δὴ μοι φράσον,
συνηγοροῦσιν ἐκ τίνων;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

1090

πείθομαι.

τί δαί; τραγωδοῦς' ἐκ τίνων;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

εὖ λέγεις.

δημηγοροῦσι δ' ἐκ τίνων;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἄρα δῆτ'

1095

ἔγνωκας ὥς οὐδὲν λέγεις;

καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὁπότεροι

πλείους σκόπει.

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

καὶ δὴ σκοπῶ.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί δῆθ' ὁρᾷς;

CLOUDS

WORSE ARGUMENT

Very well, tell me: what group do prosecutors come from?

BETTER ARGUMENT

From the wide-arsed.

WORSE ARGUMENT

I agree. And what about tragedians?

BETTER ARGUMENT

From the wide-arsed.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Correct. And politicians?

BETTER ARGUMENT

From the wide-arsed.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Now do you see that you have no case? Just look and see which make up the majority of the spectators.

BETTER ARGUMENT

I certainly will.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Well, what do you see?

ARISTOPHANES

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

- πολὺ πλείονας, νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς,
τοὺς εὐρυπρώκτους. τουτοὺ
γούν οἶδ' ἐγὼ κάκεινονι
1100 καὶ τὸν κομήτην τουτοῦ.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἐρεῖς;

Ο ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἡττήμεθ'. ὦ κινούμενοι,
πρὸς τῶν θεῶν δέξασθέ μου
θοῖμάτιον, ὥς
ἐξαυτομολῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

- 1105 τί δῆτα; πότερα τοῦτον ἀπάγεσθαι λαβὼν
βούλει τὸν υἱόν, ἢ διδάσκω σοι λέγειν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- δίδασκε καὶ κόλαζε καὶ μέμνησ' ὅπως
εὖ μοι στομώσεις αὐτόν, ἐπὶ μὲν θάτερα
οἶον δικιδίοις, τὴν δ' ἑτέραν αὐτοῦ γνάθον
1110 στόμωσον οἶαν εἰς τὰ μείζω πράγματα.

Ο ΗΤΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἀμέλει, κομιεῖ τοῦτον σοφιστὴν δεξιόν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ὥχρὸν μὲν οὖν οἶμαί γε καὶ κακοδαίμονα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖτέ νυν. οἶμαι δὲ σοὶ

CLOUDS

BETTER ARGUMENT

Gods above, the great majority are wide-arsed! I can vouch for this one here, anyway, and that one there, and this one here, with the long hair.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Well, what have you got to say?

BETTER ARGUMENT

Uncle! You buggers, for heaven's sake take my cloak; I'm deserting to your side!

BETTER ARGUMENT dashes into the Thinkery.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Your move: do you want to take this son of yours home, or shall I teach him oratory for you?

STREPSIADES

Teach him and discipline him, and remember to give him a sharp edge for me; whet one side of his mug for small-fry lawsuits, and the other side for meatier business.

WORSE ARGUMENT

Don't worry, you'll take home a handy sophist.

PHIDIPPIDES

Not to say pasty and ill-starred, if you ask me.

CHORUS

Off with you, then.

WORSE ARGUMENT takes PHIDIPPIDES into the Thinkery.

ARISTOPHANES

ταῦτα μεταμελήσειν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 1115 τοὺς κριτὰς ἃ κερδανούσιν, ἣν τι τόνδε τὸν χορὸν
ὠφελῶσ' ἐκ τῶν δικαίων, βουλόμεσθ' ἡμεῖς φράσαι.
πρῶτα μὲν γάρ, ἣν νεᾶν βούλησθ' ἐν ᾧρᾳ τοὺς
ἀγρούς,
ὑσομεν πρώτοισιν ὑμῖν, τοῖσι δ' ἄλλοις ὕστερον.
εἶτα τὸν καρπὸν τε καὶ τὰς ἀμπέλους φυλάξομεν,
1120 ὥστε μήτ' αὐχμὸν πιέζειν μήτ' ἄγαν ἐπομβρίαν.
ἣν δ' ἀτιμάσῃ τις ἡμᾶς θνητὸς ὢν οὔσας θεάς,
προσεχέτω τὸν νοῦν πρὸς ἡμῶν οἷα πείσεται κακά,
λαμβάνων οὔτ' οἶνον οὔτ' ἄλλ' οὐδὲν ἐκ τοῦ χωρίου.
ἡνίκ' ἂν γὰρ αἶ τ' ἐλαῖαι βλαστάνωσ' αἶ τ'
ἀμπελοι,
1125 ἀποκεκόψονται· τοιαύταις σφενδόναις παιήσομεν.
ἣν δὲ πλινθεύοντ' ἴδωμεν, ὑσομεν καὶ τοῦ τέγους
τὸν κέραμον αὐτοῦ χαλάζαις στρογγύλαις συν-
τρίψομεν..
κἂν γαμῇ ποτ' αὐτὸς ἢ τῶν ξυγγενῶν ἢ τῶν φίλων,
ὑσομεν τὴν νύκτα πᾶσαν, ὥστ' ἴσως βουλήσεται
1130 κἂν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τυχεῖν ὢν μᾶλλον ἢ κρῖναι κακῶς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πέμπτη, τετράς, τρίτη· μετὰ ταύτην δευτέρα·
εἶθ' ἣν ἐγὼ μάλιστα πασῶν ἡμερῶν
δέδοικα καὶ πέφρικα καὶ βδελύττομαι,

1116 ἡμεῖς RV: ὑμεῖς K: ὑμῖν EΘ: ἡμῖν N

1119 τε καὶ τὰς Coraes: τεκούσας τὰς N: τεκούσας cett.

CLOUDS

(to *Strepsiades*)

As for you, I think you'll come to regret this.

STREPSIADES enters his own house.

CHORUS LEADER

We want to announce what the judges stand to gain if they do the right thing and give this Chorus their support. One, if you want to plow your fields in season, we'll rain on you first and everyone else later. Two, we'll guard your crops and vines against attack either by drought or too much drenching. But any mortal who would slight our honor as goddesses should bear in mind what punishments he'll suffer from us: he'll get no wine or anything else from his land, for when his olives and vines start to sprout, we'll let fly at them so hard that they'll be sheared off. And if we spot him making bricks, we'll start raining and pulverize his roof tiles with a salvo of hailstones. And when he or any of his relatives or friends has a wedding, we'll rain all night long, so that maybe he'll wish he'd wound up in Egypt instead of miscasting his vote.

Enter STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES

Day five, day four, day three, after that day two, then the day that above all days intimidates me, that gives me the shivers and scares the crap out of me, because the next day

ARISTOPHANES

- εὐθὺς μετὰ ταύτην ἔσθ' ἔνη τε καὶ νέα.
 1135 πᾶς γάρ τις ὁμνύς, οἷς ὀφείλων τυγχάνω,
 θεῖς μοι πρυτανεῖ' ἀπολεῖν μέ φησι κάξολεῖν.
 κάμου μέτριά τε καὶ δίκαι' αἰτουμένον,
 "ὦ δαιμόνιε, τὸ μέν τι νυνὶ μὴ λάβης,
 τὸ δ' ἀναβαλοῦ μοι, τὸ δ' ἄφες", οὗ φασὶν ποτε
 1140 οὕτως ἀπολήψεσθ', ἀλλὰ λοιδοροῦσί με
 ὥς ἄδικός εἰμι, καὶ δικάσεσθαί φασί μοι.
 νῦν οὖν δικαζέσθων. ὀλίγον γάρ μοι μέλει,
 εἴπερ μεμάθηκεν εὖ λέγειν Φειδιππίδης.
 τάχα δ' εἴσομαι κόψας τὸ φροντιστήριον.
 παῖ, ἡμί, παῖ, παῖ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

- 1145 Στρεψιάδην ἀσπάζομαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κᾶγωγέ σ'. ἀλλὰ τουτονὶ πρῶτον λαβέ.
 χρή γὰρ ἐπιθauμάζειν τι τὸν διδάσκαλον.
 καὶ μοι τὸν υἱόν, εἰ μεμάθηκε τὸν λόγον
 ἐκείνον, εἴφ', ὃν ἀρτίως εἰσήγαγες.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

μεμάθηκεν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 1150 εὖ γ', ὦ παμβασιλεί' Ἀπαιόλη.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὥστ' ἀποφύγοις ἂν ἦντιν' ἂν βούλη δίκην.

CLOUDS

is the Old and New Day,⁸¹ when every single one of my creditors has vowed to file a lawsuit against me, ruin me, and wipe me out. I've requested fair and reasonable terms: "Look, don't be unreasonable and insist on getting this one right now; please postpone that one; forgive that one." But they say they'll never be paid on those terms, and instead they yell at me for being dishonest and promise to sue me. All right, now let them sue! I couldn't care less, if Phidippides has really learned effective oratory. I'll soon find out if I knock at the Thinkery. Boy! I say, boy!

SOCRATES answers the door.

SOCRATES

Hello, Strepsiades.

STREPSIADES

The same to you. (*giving him a purse*) But first, take this here, since one should show the teacher some appreciation. And about my son, tell me, has he learned the Argument that you brought on stage just now?

SOCRATES

He has.

STREPSIADES

Well done, Omnipotent Boondoggle!

SOCRATES

So you can beat whatever lawsuit you like.

⁸¹ The last day of the month, felt to bridge the old and the new month.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κεῖ μάρτυρες παρήσαν ὅτ' ἐδανειζόμεν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

πολλῶ γε μᾶλλον, κἂν παρῶσι χίλιοι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- βοάσομαι τᾶρα τὰν ὑπέρτονον
 1155 βοάν. ἰώ, κλάετ' ὦ 'βολοστάται,
 αὐτοί τε καὶ τάρχαῖα καὶ τόκοι τόκων.
 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄν με φλαῦρον ἐργάσαισθ' ἔτι,
 οἷος ἐμοὶ τρέφεται
 τοῖσδ' ἐνὶ δώμασι παῖς
 1160 ἀμφήκει γλώττη λάμπων,
 πρόβολος ἐμός, σωτὴρ δόμοις, ἐχθροῖς βλάβη,
 λυσανίας πατρώων μεγάλων κακῶν
 ὃν κάλεσον τρέχων ἔνδοθεν ὥς ἐμέ.
 1165 ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, ἔξελθ' οἴκων,
 αἶε σοῦ πατρός.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὃδ' ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ φίλος, ὦ φίλος.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄπιθι λαβών.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Even if witnesses were present when I borrowed the money?

SOCRATES

Even if a thousand show up; the more the merrier.

STREPSIADES

Then I'll shout a fortissimo shout!

Hah! Mourn, you moneylenders,

you and your principal and the interest on your interest!

No longer can you do me any harm,
with a boy like mine

being reared in these halls,

his double-edged tongue gleaming,

my fortress, savior of my domicile, bane of my enemies,

his father's rescuer from heavy woes!

Run inside and tell him to come out to me.

SOCRATES enters the Thinkery.

My child, my boy, come out of the house;
to your father lend an ear!

Enter SOCRATES with PHIDIPPIDES.

SOCRATES

Here is the very man.

STREPSIADES

Dear, dear boy!

SOCRATES

Take him and go.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1170 ἰὼ ἰώ, τέκνον.
ἰοὺ ἰού.

ὥς ἥδομαί σου πρῶτα τὴν χροιάν ιδών.

νῦν μέν γ' ἰδεῖν εἰ πρῶτον ἑξαρινητικούς

κάντιλογικούς, καὶ τοῦτο τοῦπιχώριον

ἀτεχνῶς ἐπανθεῖ, τὸ "τί λέγεις σύ;" καὶ δοκεῖν

1175 ἀδικοῦντ' ἀδικεῖσθαι, καὶ κακουργοῦντ', οἶδ' ὅτι.

ἐπὶ τοῦ προσώπου τ' ἐστὶν Ἀττικὸν βλέπος.

νῦν οὖν ὅπως σώσεις μ', ἐπεὶ κάπῳλεσας.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

φοβεῖ δὲ δὴ τί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὴν ἔνην τε καὶ νέαν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔνη γάρ ἐστι καὶ νέα τις ἡμέρα;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1180 εἰς ἣν γε θήσιν τὰ πρυτανεία φασί μοι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀπολοῦσ' ἄρ' αὖθ' οἱ θέντες. οὐ γάρ ἐσθ' ὅπως

μί' ἡμέρα γένοιτ' ἂν ἡμέραι δύο.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

πῶς γάρ, εἰ μή περ γ' ἄμα

αὐτὴ γένοιτ' ἂν γραῦς τε καὶ νέα γυνή.

CLOUDS

SOCRATES goes in.

STREPSIADES

Oho, son! Ta da! Good gracious, how it tickles me right away to see your color! Now it's clear at first glance that you're repudiative and contradictive, and that national trait of ours simply blooms on your face, that "What are you talking about?" look, that innocent look when you're guilty, even of a serious crime, oh don't I know it! Yes, you've got that Athenian expression all over you! Now then, it's up to you to save me, since you ruined me.

PHIDIPPIDES

And just what are you afraid of?

STREPSIADES

The Old and New Day.

PHIDIPPIDES

You mean there's a day that's old and also new?

STREPSIADES

The very day they promise to file their suits against me!

PHIDIPPIDES

Then the filers will lose, because there's no way a single day can become two days.

STREPSIADES

It can't?

PHIDIPPIDES

How could it? Unless it's possible that the same woman can simultaneously be a crone and a girl.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ μὴν νενόμισταί γ'.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1185 οὐ γὰρ οἶμαι τὸν νόμον
ἴσασιν ὀρθῶς ὅτι νοεῖ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νοεῖ δὲ τί;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ὁ Σόλων ὁ παλαιὸς ἦν φιλόδημος τὴν φύσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τουτὶ μὲν οὐδέν πω πρὸς ἔννην τε καὶ νέαν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1190 ἐκεῖνος οὖν τὴν κλήσιν εἰς δὺ ἡμέρας
ἔθηκεν, εἰς γε τὴν ἔννην τε καὶ νέαν,
ἵν' αἱ θέσεις γίγνοιντο τῇ νουμηνία.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἵνα δὴ τί τὴν ἔννην προσέθηκεν;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἵν', ὦ μέλε,

παρόντες οἱ φεύγοντες ἡμέρα μιᾷ
πρότερον ἀπαλλάττοινθ' ἐκόντες· εἰ δὲ μή,
1195 ἔωθεν ὑπανιῶντο τῇ νουμηνία.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς οὐ δέχονται δῆτα τῇ νουμηνία
ἀρχαὶ τὰ πρυτανεῖ, ἀλλ' ἔννη τε καὶ νέα;

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

But that's the custom.

PHIDIPPIDES

I think it's because they don't correctly understand the point of the law.

STREPSIADES

And what is the point?

PHIDIPPIDES

Our venerable Solon⁸² was by nature a lover of the people.

STREPSIADES

So far this has nothing to do with Old and New Day.

PHIDIPPIDES

Well, Solon established the summons on two days, the Old Day and the New Day, so that filings would occur on the day of the new moon.

STREPSIADES

And why did he establish Old Day as well?

PHIDIPPIDES

Well sir, that way defendants could appear a day early and settle out of court, and if they didn't, they'd be in for it on New Moon Morning.

STREPSIADES

Then why don't the magistrates accept the sureties on New Moon Day, but only on Old and New Day?

⁸² Archon in 594/3 and credited with inventing the traditional Athenian law code.

ARISTOPHANES

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅπερ οἱ προτένθαι γὰρ δοκοῦσί μοι παθεῖν·
ὅπως τάχιστα τὰ πρυτανεῖ ὑφeloίατο,
1200 διὰ τοῦτο προυτένθενσαν ἡμέρα μιᾷ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εὖ γ'. ὦ κακοδαίμονες, τί κάθησθ' ἀβέλτεροι,
ἡμέτερα κέρδη τῶν σοφῶν, ὄντες λίθοι,
ἀριθμός, πρόβατ' ἄλλως, ἀμφορῆς νενησμένοι;
ὥστ' εἰς ἑμαντὸν καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τουτουὶ
1205 ἐπ' εὐτυχίαισιν ἀστέον μούγκωμιον.

“μάκαρ ὦ Στρεψιάδες
αὐτός τ' ἔφυς, ὡς σοφός,
χοῖον τὸν υἱὸν τρέφεις,”
φήσουσι δὴ μ' οἱ φίλοι
χοῖ δημόται
1210 ζηλοῦντες ἡνίκ' ἂν σὺ νι-
κᾷς λέγων τὰς δίκας.
ἀλλ' εἰσάγων σε βούλομαι
πρῶτον ἐστιᾶσαι.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α'

εἰτ' ἄνδρα τῶν αὐτοῦ τι χρὴ προΐεναι;
1215 οὐδέποτε γ', ἀλλὰ κρεῖττον εὐθὺς ἦν τότε
ἀπερυνθριάσαι μᾶλλον ἢ σχεῖν πράγματα,
ὅτε τῶν ἑμαντοῦ γ' ἔνεκα νυνὶ χρημάτων
ἔλκω σε κλητεύσουντα, καὶ γενήσομαι
ἐχθρὸς ἔτι πρὸς τούτοισιν ἀνδρὶ δημότῃ.

CLOUDS

PHIDIPPIDES

I think they're under the same compulsion as the food inspectors before a festival: to embezzle the sureties as soon as possible, they start tasting a day early.

STREPSIADES

Well done! (*to the spectators*) You pitiful saps, why are you sitting there brainless, pure money in the bank for us intellectuals? You're stones, ciphers, mere sheep, a bunch of empty jars! I've simply got to sing an encomium for me and this son of mine to celebrate our success.

"Happy Strepsiades,
you yourself were born sage,
and what a son you're rearing!"
That's what my friends will say to me,
and my neighbors too,
in envy, when you win my lawsuits
with your oratory.
But first I want to take you home
and throw you a dinner party.

STREPSIADES and PHIDIPPIDES go into their house. Enter FIRST CREDITOR with Witness.

FIRST CREDITOR

So is a man supposed to throw away a piece of his own estate? No, never! An unblushing refusal right at the start would have been better than this hassle. Here I am dragging you along to witness a summons over my money, and on top of that I'll be making an enemy of a man from my

1220 ἀτὰρ οὐδέποτε γε τὴν πατρίδα καταισχυνῶ
ζῶν, ἀλλὰ καλοῦμαι Στρεψιάδην—

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τίς οὐτοσί;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

—εἰς τὴν ἔνην τε καὶ νέαν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μαρτύρομαι

ὅτι εἰς δὺ εἶπεν ἡμέρας. τοῦ χρήματος;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

τῶν δώδεκα μνῶν, ἃς ἔλαβες ὠνούμενος
τὸν ψαρὸν ἵππον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1225 ἵππον; οὐκ ἀκούετε;
ὃν πάντες ὑμεῖς ἴστε μισοῦνθ' ἵππικὴν.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

καὶ νῆ Δί' ἀποδώσειν γ' ἐπώμνυς τοὺς θεούς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ γάρ πω τότ' ἐξηπίστατο
Φειδιππίδης μοι τὸν ἀκατάβλητον λόγον.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

1230 νῦν δὲ διὰ τοῦτ' ἔξαρνος εἶναι διανοεῖ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί γὰρ ἄλλ' ἢ ἀπολαύσαιμι τοῦ μαθήματος;

CLOUDS

own neighborhood. But as long as I live I'll never disgrace my country! I hereby summon Strepsiades—

STREPSIADES

(*coming outside*) Who's that?

FIRST CREDITOR

—to appear on Old and New Day.

STREPSIADES

(*to the spectators*) I call you to witness that he specified two days. (*to First Creditor*) What's the problem?

FIRST CREDITOR

The twelve minas that you borrowed to buy the charcoal stallion.

STREPSIADES

Horse? Listen to that! You all know that I can't stand anything to do with horses!

FIRST CREDITOR

By Zeus, you also swore by the gods that you'd repay me.

STREPSIADES

I won't, by Zeus; back then, my Phidippides hadn't yet learned the irrefutable Argument.

FIRST CREDITOR

And for that reason you now intend to deny the debt?

STREPSIADES

Well, what other return will I get on his tuition?

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

καὶ ταῦτ' ἐθελήσεις ἀπομόσαι μοι τοὺς θεοὺς
ἵν' ἂν κελεύσω ἔγώ σε;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοὺς ποίους θεούς;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

τὸν Δία, τὸν Ἑρμῆν, τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νῆ Δία,

1235 καὶν προσκαταθείην γ', ὥστ' ὁμόσαι, τριώβολον.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

ἀπόλοιο τοῖνυν ἔνεκ' ἀναιδείας ἔτι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄλσιν διασμηχθεῖς ὄναιτ' ἂν οὔτοσί.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

οἴμ' ὥς καταγελᾷς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔξ χοᾶς χωρήσεται.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

οὔτοι μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν μέγαν καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς
ἐμοῦ καταπροίξει.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1240 θαυμασίως ἦσθην θεοῖς,
καὶ Ζεὺς γελοῖος ὁμνύμενος τοῖς εἰδόσιν.

CLOUDS

FIRST CREDITOR

And you'll be willing to forswear it by the gods, wherever I prescribe?

STREPSIADES

What sort of gods?

FIRST CREDITOR

Zeus, Hermes, Poseidon.

STREPSIADES

Certainly Zeus! I'd even put down an extra three obols to swear by him!

FIRST CREDITOR

Then I hope your shamelessness ruins you yet!

STREPSIADES

(*patting the First Creditor's belly*) This here would do nicely with a brine treatment.⁸³

FIRST CREDITOR

Good god, you're making fun of me!

STREPSIADES

It'll hold ten liters.

FIRST CREDITOR

So help me mighty Zeus, so help me all the gods, you won't get away with treating me this way!

STREPSIADES

"Gods!" That's wonderfully amusing. Swearing by Zeus is a joke among the cognoscenti.

⁸³ I.e. as a preliminary to tanning, to make a wineskin.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

ἦ μὴν σὺ τούτων τῷ χρόνῳ δώσεις δίκην.
ἀλλ' εἴτ' ἀποδώσεις μοι τὰ χρήματ' εἴτε μή,
ἀπόπεμψον ἀποκρινάμενος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔχε νυν ἥσυχος·

1245 ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτίκ' ἀποκρινούμαί σοι σαφῶς.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

τί σοι δοκεῖ δράσειν; ἀποδώσειν σοι δοκεῖ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ποῦ 'σθ' οὗτος ἀπαιτῶν με τὰργύριον; λέγε,
τουτὶ τί ἐστι;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

τοῦθ' ὃ τι ἐστί; κάρδοπος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔπειτ' ἀπαιτεῖς ἀργύριον τοιούτος ὢν;
1250 οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην οὐδ' ἂν ὀβολὸν οὐδενὶ
ὅστις καλέσειε “κάρδοπον” τὴν καρδόπην.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

οὐκ ἄρ' ἀποδώσεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐχ ὅσον γ' ἔμ' εἰδέναί.
οὔκουν ἀνύσας τι θᾶπτον ἀπολιταργιεῖς
ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας;

CLOUDS

FIRST CREDITOR

Mark my words, the time will come when you'll get your just deserts for this. But for now, just tell me before I go whether you intend to repay me or not.

STREPSIADES

Just hold still; I'll be right back with a straight answer for you.

STREPSIADES goes into his house.

FIRST CREDITOR

(to the Witness) What do you think he'll do? Do you think he'll pay?

STREPSIADES returns with a mortar.

STREPSIADES

Where's the guy who's demanding the money from me? Tell me, what's this?

FIRST CREDITOR

That? A mortar.

STREPSIADES

And you're demanding money, after an answer like that? I wouldn't repay a single penny to anyone who calls a morté a mortar.

FIRST CREDITOR

I take it you won't pay.

STREPSIADES

Not as far as I know. Now take a hike, and make it snappy too, away from my door.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Α΄

ἄπειμι· καὶ τοῦτ' ἴσθ', ὅτι

1255 θήσω πρυτανεῖ, ἣ μηκέτι ζῶην ἐγώ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

προσαποβαλεῖς ἄρ' αὐτὰ πρὸς ταῖς δώδεκα.
καίτοι σε τοῦτό γ' οὐχὶ βούλομαι παθεῖν
ὅτιν' ἵκλεσας εὐηθικῶς "τὴν κάρδοπον".

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

ἰώ μοι μοι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔα·

1260 τίς οὐτοσί ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ θρηγῶν; οὔ τι που
τῶν Καρκίνου τις δαιμόνων ἐφθέγγατο;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

τί δ', ὅστις εἰμί, τοῦτο βούλεσθ' εἰδέναι;
ἀνὴρ κακοδαίμων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κατὰ σεαυτὸν νυν τρέπου.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

1265 ὦ σκληρὲ δαῖμον· ὦ τύχαι θραυσάντυγες
ἵππων ἐμῶν· ὦ Παλλάς, ὥς μ' ἀπώλεσας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δαί σε Τλημπόλεμός ποτ' εἵργασται κακόν;

⁸⁴ A tragic dramatist who won at least one first prize (Dionysia

CLOUDS

FIRST CREDITOR

I'm going. But be aware that I'll be depositing sureties if it's the last thing I do!

STREPSIADES

Then you'll be throwing that away on top of the twelve minas. Still, I don't want that to happen to you just because you were simple enough to say "mortar."

Exit FIRST CREDITOR with Witness. Enter SECOND CREDITOR.

SECOND CREDITOR

Oh me, oh my!

STREPSIADES

Eh? Who can this be, beating his breast? Could it possibly be one of Carcinus' deities that made that sound?⁸⁴

SECOND CREDITOR

Who am I? Why do you want to know? A man ill-fated.

STREPSIADES

Then keep it to yourself.

SECOND CREDITOR

O cruel deity, o mischance that unhorsed my chariot rail!
O Pallas, how you have ruined me!⁸⁵

STREPSIADES

And what harm has Tlempolemus ever done you?

446), served as a general in 431, and had three sons who were famous dancers; one of them, Xenocles, also wrote tragedies.

⁸⁵ These lines parody Alcmena's speech in the tragedy *Licymnius* by Carcinus' son, Xenocles; Tlempolemus had killed her half-brother.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

μὴ σκῶπτέ μ', ὦ τᾶν, ἀλλὰ μοι τὰ χρήματα
τὸν υἱὸν ἀποδοῦναι κέλευσον ἄλαβεν,
ἄλλως τε μέντοι καὶ κακῶς πεπραγότι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὰ ποῖα ταῦτα χρήμαθ' ;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

ἀδανείσατο.

1270

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κακῶς ἄρ' ὄντως εἶχες, ὥς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

ἵππους γ' ἐλαύνων ἐξέπεσον νῇ τοὺς θεούς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δῆτα ληρεῖς ὥσπερ ἀπ' ὄνου καταπεσών;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

ληρῶ, τὰ χρήματ' ἀπολαβεῖν εἰ βούλομαι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως σύ γ' αὐτὸς ὑγιαίνεις.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

1275

τί daί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ὥσπερ σεσεῖσθαί μοι δοκεῖς.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

σὺν δὲ νῇ τὸν Ἑρμῆν προσκεκλήσεσθαί γ' ἐμοί,
εἰ μὴ ᾗ ποδώσεις τὰργύριον.

180

CLOUDS

SECOND CREDITOR

Don't mock me, sir; just tell your son to pay back the money he borrowed, especially now that I'm in a bad way.

STREPSIADES

What money is that?

SECOND CREDITOR

What he borrowed!

STREPSIADES

Then you really are in a bad way, it seems to me.

SECOND CREDITOR

Yes, by heaven, I was driving a chariot and fell off.

STREPSIADES

The way you're jabbering, I'd say you fell off your rocker!

SECOND CREDITOR

Me jabber, just wanting to get my money back?

STREPSIADES

There's no way you'll ever regain your sanity.

SECOND CREDITOR

How so?

STREPSIADES

In my opinion, there's something wrong with your brain.

SECOND CREDITOR

And in my opinion, by Hermes, you're going to get a summons from me if you don't repay my money.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κάτειπέ νυν·

1280 πότερα νομίζεις καινὸν αἰὲ τὸν Δία
ὔειν ὕδωρ ἐκάστοτ', ἧ τὸν ἥλιον
ἔλκειν κάτωθεν ταῦτὸ τοῦθ' ὕδωρ πάλιν;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β'

οὐκ οἶδ' ἔγωγ' ὁπότερον, οὐδέ μοι μέλει.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ '

πῶς οὖν ἀπολαβεῖν τὰργύριον δίκαιος εἶ,
εἰ μηδὲν οἶσθα τῶν μετεώρων πραγμάτων;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β'

1285 ἀλλ' εἰ σπανίζεις τὰργυρίου μοι τὸν τόκον
ἀπόδοτε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοῦτο δ' ἔσθ', ὁ τόκος, τί θηρίον;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β'

τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ κατὰ μῆνα καὶ καθ' ἡμέραν
πλέον πλέον τὰργύριον αἰὲ γίγνεται
ὑπορρέοντος τοῦ χρόνου;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καλῶς λέγεις.

1290 τί δῆτα; τὴν θάλατταν ἔσθ' ὅτι πλείονα
νυνὶ νομίζεις ἢ πρὸ τοῦ;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β'

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἴσην.
οὐ γὰρ δίκαιον πλείον' εἶναι.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

So tell me, do you think that Zeus rains new water every time, or that the sun draws up from below the very same water again?

SECOND CREDITOR

I don't know and I don't care!

STREPSIADES

Then how can you justifiably ask for your money back, knowing nothing of meteorology?

SECOND CREDITOR

Look, if you're short, at least pay me the interest on my money.

STREPSIADES

This "interest," what sort of beast is it?

SECOND CREDITOR

None other than the tendency of a given sum of money to grow ever bigger and bigger, day by day and month by month; as time flows by.

STREPSIADES

Well said. Now then, the sea: do you think it's any bigger now than it used to be?

SECOND CREDITOR

Certainly not; it's the same. It's against the rules for it to be bigger.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

κᾶτα πῶς

- αὕτη μέν, ὦ κακόδαιμον, οὐδέν γίγνεται
ἐπιρρεόντων τῶν ποταμῶν πλείων, σὺ δὲ
1295 ζητεῖς ποιῆσαι τὰργύριον πλέον τὸ σόν;
οὐκ ἀποδιώξει σαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας;
φέρει μοι τὸ κέντρον.

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὑπαγε. τί μέλλεις; οὐκ ἔλας, ὦ σαμφόρα;

ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ Β΄

ταῦτ' οὐχ ὕβρις δῆτ' ἐστίν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄξεις; ἐπιαλῶ

- 1300 κεντῶν ὑπὸ τὸν πρωκτόν σε τὸν σειραφόρον.
φεύγεις; ἔμελλον σ' ἄρα κινήσειν ἐγὼ
αὐτοῖς τροχοῖς τοῖς σοῖσι καὶ ξυνωρίσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) οἶον τὸ πραγμάτων ἐρᾶν φλαύρων· ὁ γὰρ
γέρων ὃδ' ἐρασθεὶς

- 1305 ἀποστερηῆσαι βούλεται

τὰ χρήμαθ' ἀδανείσατο.

κοὺκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐ τήμερον

λήψεταιί τι πράγμ' ὃ τοῦ-

τον ποιήσει τὸν σοφι-

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Then what about this, you sadsack: if the sea grows no bigger even though rivers flow into it, where do you get off looking to make your money grow bigger? So prosecute yourself right off my property! Boy, fetch me my goad!

SECOND CREDITOR

(*to the spectators*) Be my witnesses to this!

STREPSIADES

Giddyup! Quit stalling! Get going, you branded nag!

SECOND CREDITOR

This is a clear case of assault!

STREPSIADES

Move out! I'm going to grab you and shove this goad up your thoroughbred arsehole! Running off, eh? I knew I'd get you to move, for all your wheels and teams of steeds.

SECOND CREDITOR runs off. STREPSIADES goes into house.

CHORUS

How momentous it is to lust for villainous business,
like this old man: in the grip of this lust,
he wants to avoid repaying
the money he borrowed.

And today for sure,
he'll lay hold of some business
that will make this sophist suddenly

1310 στήν <ἀπάντων> ὧν πανουργεῖν ἤρξατ' ἐξ-
αίφνης †τι κακὸν λαβεῖν†.

(ἀντ) οἶμαι γὰρ αὐτὸν αὐτίχ' εὐρήσειν ὅπερ
πάλαι ποτ' ἐπῆται,
εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν δεινόν οἱ
γνώμας ἐναντίας λέγειν
1315 τοῖσιν δικαίοις, ὥστε νι-
κᾶν ἅπαντας, οἷσπερ ἂν
ξυγγένηται, κᾶν λέγη
παμπόνηρ'. ἴσως δ' ἴσως βουλήσεται
1320 κᾶφωνον αὐτὸν εἶναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ιοῦ ἰού.
ὦ γείτονες καὶ ξυγγενεῖς καὶ δημόται,
ἀμυνάθετέ μοι τυπτομένῳ πάσῃ τέχνῃ.
οἶμοι κακοδαίμων τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ τῆς γνάθου.
ὦ μιარέ, τύπτεις τὸν πατέρα;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1325 φήμ', ὦ πάτερ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὁρᾷθ' ὁμολογοῦνθ' ὅτι με τύπτει;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ μάλα.

1309 <ἀπάντων> Austin 1310 †τι κακὸν λαβεῖν† e.g.
ἄποινα τείσαι Henderson, ἀποστραφῆναι Sommerstein

CLOUDS

<pay dearly for>
all the wrongful activities he undertook.

For I think he'll soon find
what he's long been asking for,
a son grown formidable
at arguing views counter
to what's right, so that
he can beat anyone he may meet,
even if he argues what's totally bad.
But maybe, just maybe,
his father will wish
his son were mute.

*STREPSIADES runs from the house, pursued by PHIDIP-
PIDES.*

STREPSIADES

Help! Help! Neighbors, kinsmen, fellow demesmen, res-
cue me any way you can! I'm being beaten! Oh dear, my
unlucky head! My jaw! (*to Phidippides*) You scum, you'd
beat your father?

PHIDIPPIDES

That's right, father.

STREPSIADES

See, he admits beating me!

PHIDIPPIDES

Sure I do.

1312 ἐπῆται Hermann: ἐπεζήται RV: ἐζήται cett.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ μιὰρὲ καὶ πατραλοῖα καὶ τοιχωρύχε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

αὐθὶς με ταῦτὰ ταῦτα καὶ πλείω λέγε.

ἂρ' οἶσθ' ὅτι χαίρω πόλλ' ἀκούων καὶ κακά;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ λακκόπρωκτε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1330

πάττε πολλοῖς τοῖς ῥόδοις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὸν πατέρα τύπτεις;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

κἀποφανῶ γε νῆ Δία

ὥς ἐν δίκη σ' ἔτυπτον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ μιὰρώτατε,

καὶ πῶς γένοιτ' ἂν πατέρα τύπτειν ἐν δίκη;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔγωγ' ἀποδείξω καὶ σε νικήσω λέγων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τουτὶ σὺ νικήσεις;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1335

πολύ γε καὶ ῥαδίως.

ἐλοῦ δ' ὁπότερον τοῖν λόγοιν βούλει λέγειν.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

You scum, you parricide, you criminal!

PHIDIPPIDES

Call me those very names again, and worse. Do you know I enjoy being called lots of bad names?

STREPSIADES

You giant arsehole!

PHIDIPPIDES

Strew me with lots of roses!

STREPSIADES

You're beating your father?

PHIDIPPIDES

God yes, and I'll prove that I was right to beat you.

STREPSIADES

Scum of the earth! Just how could it be right to beat a father?

PHIDIPPIDES

I'll demonstrate, and I'll win the argument too.

STREPSIADES

You'll win that argument?

PHIDIPPIDES

Completely, with no sweat. Just choose which of the two arguments you want to defend.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ποίοιιν λόγοιιν;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τὸν κρείττον' ἢ τὸν ἥττονα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔδιδασάμην μέντοι σε νῆ Δί', ὦ μέλε,
τοῖσιν δικαίοις ἀντιλέγειν, εἰ ταῦτά γε
1340 μέλλεις ἀναπείσειν, ὥς δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν
τὸν πατέρα τύπτεισθ' ἐστὶν ὑπὸ τῶν νιέων.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οἶομαι μέντοι σ' ἀναπείσειν, ὥστε γε
οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἀκροασάμενος οὐδὲν ἀντερεῖς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ὅ τι καὶ λέξεις ἀκοῦσαι βούλομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) σὸν ἔργον, ὦ πρεσβῦτα, φροντίζειν ὅπη
1346 τὸν ἄνδρα κρατήσεις,
ὥς οὗτος, εἰ μή τῳ 'πεποιθὲν, οὐκ ἂν ᾔν
οὕτως ἀκόλαστος.
ἀλλ' ἔσθ' ὅτῳ θρασύνεται· δηλὸν <γε τοι>
1350 τὸ λῆμα τὸ τάνδρός.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ' ἐξ ὅτου τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαθ' ἡ μάχη γενέσθαι
ἤδη λέγειν χρὴ πρὸς χορόν· πάντως δὲ τοῦτο
δράσεις.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

What do you mean, two arguments?

PHIDIPPIDES

The Better or the Worse.

STREPSIADES

By god I truly have had you taught to speak against what's right, my boy, if you can carry this proposal, that it's right and good for a father to be beaten by his sons.

PHIDIPPIDES

But I think I can carry it. When you've heard me out, not even you will have anything to say in rebuttal.

STREPSIADES

All right then, I'd like to hear your side of the argument.

CHORUS

Your task, old man, is to figure a way
to master your opponent,
for if he had nothing up his sleeve
he wouldn't have been so sassy.
Yes, there's something that feeds his mettle; certainly
the man's boldness is plain.

CHORUS LEADER

But now you're supposed to tell the Chorus how this quarrel originally started, though you'll do that anyway.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- καὶ μὴν ὅθεν γε πρῶτον ἡρξάμεσθα λοιδορεῖσθαι
 ἐγὼ φράσω. ὅτι γὰρ εἰσιτιώμεθ', ὥσπερ ἴστε,
 1355 πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν τὴν λύραν λαβόντ' ἐγὼ ἔκλευσα
 ᾄσαι Σιμωνίδου μέλος, τὸν Κριόν, ὡς ἐπέχθη.
 ὁ δ' εὐθέως ἀρχαῖον εἶν' ἔφασκε τὸ κιθαρίζειν
 ᾄδειν τε πίνονθ', ὥσπερὶ κάχρυς γυναικ' ἀλούσαν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- οὐ γὰρ τότ' εὐθὺς χρῆν σ' ἀράττεσθαι τε καὶ
 πατεῖσθαι,
 1360 ᾄδειν κελεύονθ', ὥσπερὶ τέττιγας ἐστιῶντα;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- τοιαῦτα μέντοι καὶ τότ' ἔλεγεν ἔνδον, οἷάπερ νῦν,
 καὶ τὸν Σιμωνίδην ἔφασκ' εἶναι κακὸν ποιητήν.
 καὶ γὰρ μόλις μὲν, ἀλλ' ὅμως, ἠνεσχόμην τὸ πρῶτον.
 ἔπειτα δ' ἐκέλευσ' αὐτὸν ἀλλὰ μυρρίνην λαβόντα
 1365 τῶν Αἰσχύλου λέξαι τί μοι. καὶ θ' οὗτος εὐθὺς εἶπεν·
 “ἐγὼ γὰρ Αἰσχύλον νομίζω πρῶτον ἐν ποιηταῖς—
 ψόφου πλέων, ἀξύστατον, στόμφακα, κρημνοποιόν.”
 κἀνταῦθα πῶς οἶεσθέ μου τὴν καρδίαν ὀρεχθεῖν;
 ὅμως δὲ τὸν θυμὸν δακῶν ἔφην· “σὺ δ' ἀλλὰ τούτων
 1370 λέξον τι τῶν νεωτέρων, ἅττ' ἐστὶ τὰ σοφὰ ταῦτα.”
 ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ἦγ' Εὐριπίδου ῥῆσιν τιν', ὡς ἐκίνει
 ἀδελφός, ὦ ἑλεξίκακε, τὴν ὁμομητρίαν ἀδελφήν.

1371 ἦγ' Borthwick: ἦισ(εν) a

⁸⁶ Simonides of Ceos (c. 556-468) composed this victory ode

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

I will indeed tell you how our name-calling first started. You'll recall that we were having a feast. First of all I asked him to pick up his lyre and sing a song by Simonides, the one about how Ram got shorn,⁸⁶ and he right away said it was old fashioned to play the lyre and sing at a drinking party, like a woman hulling barley.

PHIDIPPIDES

Why, right then and there you should have been pounded and stomped—asking me sing, as if you were throwing a feast for cicadas!

STREPSIADES

That's just the kind of thing he kept saying there in the house, what he's saying now. And he said that Simonides was a bad poet! I only just put up with it, but I did put up with it, at first. Then I asked him if he would at least take a myrtle sprig⁸⁷ and sing me something from the works of Aeschylus. And he right away said, "In my opinion, Aeschylus is chief among poets—chiefly full of noise, incoherent, a windbag, a maker of lofty locutions." Can you imagine how that jolted my heart? But I bit back my anger and said, "All right then, recite something from these modern poets, that brainy stuff, whatever it is." And he right away tossed off some speech by Euripides about how a brother, god save me, was screwing his sister by the same mother!⁸⁸ I

(fr. 507 Campbell) around the turn of the fifth century for a wrestler who had defeated Crius of Aegina (the name means "Ram") at the Nemean games. ⁸⁷ The custom at symposia when a singer did not accompany himself on the lyre.

⁸⁸ An allusion probably to Macareus and Canace in the tragedy *Aeolus*.

- 1375 καὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἐξηνεσχόμην, ἀλλ' εὐθέως ἀράπτω
πολλοῖς κακοῖς καὶ σχροῖσι. καὶ τ' ἐντεῦθεν, οἷον εἰκός,
ἔπος πρὸς ἔπος ἡρειδόμεσθ'· εἴθ' οὗτος ἐπαναπηδᾷ,
κάπειτ' ἔφλα με κασπὸ δει κάπνιγε καπέτριβεν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐκ οὐν δικαίως, ὅστις οὐκ Εὐριπίδην ἐπαινεῖς,
σοφώτατον;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

σοφώτατον γ' ἐκείνον, ὦ—τί σ' εἶπω;
ἀλλ' αὖθις αὖ τυπτήσομαι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί', ἐν δίκῃ γ' ἄν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 1380 καὶ πῶς δικαίως; ὅστις ὦ 'ναίσχυντέ σ' ἐξέθρεψα
αἰσθανόμενός σου πάντα τραυλίζοντος, ὅτι νοοίης.
εἰ μὲν γε βρῦν εἵποις, ἐγὼ γνοὺς ἂν πιεῖν ἐπέσχον·
μαμμᾶν δ' ἂν αἰτήσαντος, ἡκόν σοι φέρων ἂν ἄρτον·
κακκᾶν δ' ἂν οὐκ ἔφθης φράσας, καὶ γὰρ λαβὼν θύραζε
1385 ἐξέφερον ἂν καὶ προυσχόμην σε. σὺ δέ με νῦν
ἀπάγχων,
βοῶντα καὶ κεκραγόντ' ὅτι
χεζητιώην, οὐκ ἔτλης
ἔξω 'ξενεγκεῖν, ὦ μιარέ,
θύραζέ μ', ἀλλὰ πνιγόμενος
1390 αὐτοῦ 'ποίησα κακκᾶν.

1376 καπέτριβεν Π3 η S: καπέθλιβεν RV

CLOUDS

couldn't put up with it any longer, but right away started pelting him with lots of nasty, dirty words. And from that point on, as you might expect, we laid into each other word for word. Then he jumps up at me, and starts to bash me and thump me and throttle me and crush me!

PHIDIPPIDES

And didn't you have it coming, for refusing to praise Euripides, a genius?

STREPSIADES

Oh, that one's certainly a genius, you, oh what'll I call you? No, I'll only get beaten all over again.

PHIDIPPIDES

Zeus yes, and you'd deserve it!

STREPSIADES

Just how would I deserve it? I'm the one who raised you, you brazen ingrate, the one who listened to all your baby talk and knew what you meant. If you said "dwik," I would know to get you a drink. When you asked for "babba," I'd be there with bread. And before you even finished saying "poopie," I'd pick you up, take you outside, and hold you at arm's length. But when you were choking me just now, and I was bellowing and screaming that I had to shit, you balked at taking *me* outside, you scum, but you kept choking me until I made poopie right there!

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) οἷμαί γε τῶν νεωτέρων τὰς καρδίας
 πηδᾶν ὃ τι λέξει.
 εἰ γὰρ τοιαῦτά γ' οὔτος ἐξεργασμένος
 λαλῶν ἀναπείσει,
 1395 τὸ δέρμα τῶν γεραιτέρων λάβοιμεν ἂν
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐρεβίνθου.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

σὸν ἔργον, ὦ καινῶν ἐπῶν κινητὰ καὶ μοχλευτά,
 πειθώ τινα ζητεῖν, ὅπως δόξεις λέγειν δίκαια.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- ὥς ἡδὺ καινοῖς πράγμασιν καὶ δεξιοῖς ὁμιλεῖν
 1400 καὶ τῶν καθεστώτων νόμων ὑπερφρονεῖν δύνασθαι.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὅτε μὲν ἱππικῇ τὸν νοῦν μόνη προσεῖχον,
 οὐδ' ἂν τρί' εἰπεῖν ῥήμαθ' οἷός τ' ἦν πρὶν
 ἐξαμαρτεῖν·
 νυνὶ δ', ἐπειδὴ μ' οὔτοσὶ τούτων ἔπαυσεν αὐτός,
 γνώμαις δὲ λεπταῖς καὶ λόγοις ξύνειμι καὶ μερίμ-
 ναις,
 1405 οἷμαι διδάζειν ὥς δίκαιον τὸν πατέρα κολάζειν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔππευε τοίνυν νῆ Δί', ὥς ἔμοιγε κρεῖττόν ἐστιν
 ἔππων τρέφειν τέθριππον ἢ τυπτόμενον ἐπιτριβῆναι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐκέισε δ' ὅθεν ἀπέσχισάς με τοῦ λόγου μέτειμι,
 καὶ πρῶτ' ἐρήσομαί σε τουτί· παῖδά μ' ὄντ' ἔτυπτες;

CLOUDS

CHORUS

I'm sure the hearts of the young
are throbbing to hear his reply.
If he can practice that sort of behavior,
and then win approval by glib talk,
we'd value the oldsters' hides
at nary a fig.

CHORUS LEADER

The floor is yours, you instigator and engineer of novel
discourse. Find a way to talk us into thinking what you say
is right.

PHIDIPPIDES

How agreeable is intimacy with novel and clever activities,
and the power to scorn established customs! Back when I
had a one-track mind for horse racing, I couldn't get three
words out before I stumbled over them. But now that my
adversary himself has made me give all that up, and I'm at
home with subtle ideas, arguments, and contemplations,
I'm sure I can demonstrate that it's right to spank one's
father.

STREPSIADES

Back to the cavalry then, by Zeus! I'd much rather support
a four-horse team than get beaten to a pulp.

PHIDIPPIDES

I'll pursue my argument from the point where you cut me
off, and first ask you this: did you beat me when I was a
boy?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἔγωγέ σ', εὐνοῶν τε καὶ κηδόμενος.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1410 εἰπὲ δὴ μοι,
οὐ καμὲ σοὶ δίκαιόν ἐστιν εὐνοεῖν ὁμοίως
τύπτειν τ', ἐπειδὴ περ γε τοῦτ' ἔστ' εὐνοεῖν, τὸ τύπτειν;
πῶς γὰρ τὸ μὲν σὸν σῶμα χρή πληγῶν ἀθῶον εἶναι,
τοῦμόν δὲ μή; καὶ μὴν ἔφυν ἐλεύθερός γε καγώ.
1415 “κλάουσι παῖδες, πατέρα δ' οὐ κλάειν δοκεῖς;”
φήσεις νομίζεσθαι σὺ παιδὸς τοῦτο τοῦργον εἶναι
ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἀντίποιμ' ἂν ὡς δις παῖδες οἱ γέροντες.
εἰκός τε μᾶλλον τοὺς γέροντας ἢ νέους τι κλάειν,
ὅσῳ περ ἐξαμαρτάνειν ἤττον δίκαιον αὐτούς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 1420 ἀλλ' οὐδαμοῦ νομίζεται τὸν πατέρα τοῦτο πάσχειν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

- οὐκ οὐν ἀνὴρ ὁ τὸν νόμον θεὸς τοῦτον ἦν τὸ πρῶτον,
ὥσπερ σὺ καγώ, καὶ λέγων ἔπειθε τοὺς παλαιούς;
ἤττόν τι δῆτ' ἔξεστι καμοὶ καινὸν αὖ τὸ λοιπὸν
θεῖναι νόμον τοῖς νιέσιν, τοὺς πατέρας ἀντιτύπτειν;
1425 ὅσας δὲ πληγὰς εἴχομεν πρὶν τὸν νόμον τεθῆναι,
ἀφίεμεν, καὶ δίδομεν αὐτοῖς προῖκα συγκεκόφθαι.
σκέψαι δὲ τοὺς ἀλεκτρύονας καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ βοτὰ ταυτί,
ὡς τοὺς πατέρας ἀμύνεται· καίτοι τί διαφέρουσιν
ἡμῶν ἐκεῖνοι, πλήν γ' ὅτι ψηφίσματ' οὐ γράφουσιν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

- 1430 τί δῆτ', ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἀλεκτρύονας ἅπαντα μιμεῖ,

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Yes indeed, out of good will and concern.

PHIDIPPIDES

Then tell me, if administering beatings is an expression of good will, isn't it right that I show you good will in the same way, with a beating? How is it fair that your body should be immune from blows, but not mine? "The children wail; you think the father shouldn't?"⁸⁹ You'll reply that this treatment of children is customary; but I'd counter that old men have become children again. And it makes better sense for old men to wail than young ones, in that their misbehavior is less appropriate.

STREPSIADES

But nowhere is it the law that a father be treated this way.

PHIDIPPIDES

Well, wasn't it a man like you and me who originally proposed this law and persuaded the ancients to adopt it? If so, am I any less free to establish in my turn a new law for the sons of tomorrow, that they should beat their fathers back? We award amnesty to fathers for all the blows we got before the law took effect, and we waive compensation for our beatings. Consider how roosters and other such creatures stand up to their fathers. After all, how do they differ from us, except that they don't legislate?

STREPSIADES

If you're going to ape roosters in every respect, then why

⁸⁹ Adapting Euripides, *Alcestis* 691 (Pheres to his son Admetus, who had asked him to die in his stead): "You like the daylight; you think your father doesn't?"

ARISTOPHANES

οὐκ ἐσθίεις καὶ τὴν κόπρον καπὶ ξύλου καθεύδεις;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐ ταυτόν, ὦ τᾶν, ἐστίν, οὐδ' ἂν Σωκράτει δοκοίη.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ τύπτ'· εἰ δὲ μή, σταντόν ποτ' αἰτιάσει.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ πῶς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐπεὶ σὲ μὲν δίκαιός εἰμ' ἐγὼ κολάζειν,
σὺ δ', ἦν γένηταί σοι, τὸν υἱόν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1435

ἦν δὲ μὴ γένηται,
μάτην ἐμοὶ κεκλαύσεται, σὺ δ' ἐγχανὼν τεθνήξεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐμοὶ μέν, ὦνδρες ἥλικες, δοκεῖ λέγειν δίκαια,
κᾶμοιγε συγχωρεῖν δοκεῖ τούτοισι τᾶπιεικῇ·
κλάειν γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰκός ἐστ', ἦν μὴ δίκαια δρῶμεν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

σκέψαι δὲ χιτέραν ἔτι γνώμην.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1440

ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλοῦμαι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἴσως γ' οὐκ ἀχθέσει παθὼν ἅ νῦν πέπονθας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς δὴ; δίδαξον γὰρ τί μ' ἐκ τούτων ἐπωφελήσεις.

CLOUDS

don't you peck dung too, and sleep on a perch?

PHIDIPPIDES

That's different, sir, as Socrates would agree.

STREPSIADES

In that case don't beat me; if you do, you'll kick yourself one day.

PHEDIPPIDES

Why is that?

STREPSIADES

Because I'm within my rights to spank you, and you to spank your son, if you have one.

PHIDIPPIDES

But if I don't have one, I'll have wailed for nothing and you'll go to your grave laughing at me!

STREPSIADES

In my opinion, you gentlemen of my own age out there, his argument is right, and we should concede that these youngsters have made a valid point. It's only fitting that we should wail if we misbehave.

PHIDIPPIDES

Now consider yet another proposition.

STREPSIADES

No, it'll be the death of me!

PHIDIPPIDES

Not at all; you may even be less annoyed about what just happened to you.

STREPSIADES

How so? Explain what further benefit you can bring me out of all this!

ARISTOPHANES

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τὴν μητέρ' ὥσπερ καὶ σὲ τυπτήσω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί φῆς, τί φῆς σύ;

τοῦθ' ἕτερον αὖ μείζον κακόν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δ' ἦν ἔχων τὸν ἥττω

1445 λόγον σε νικήσω λέγων

τὴν μητέρ' ὡς τύπτειν χρεών;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἦ, ταῦτ' ἦν ποιῆς,

οὐδέεν σε κωλύσει σεαυ-

τὸν ἐμβαλεῖν

εἰς τὸ βάραθρον

1450 μετὰ Σωκράτους

καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν ἥττω;

ταυτὶ δι' ὑμᾶς, ὦ Νεφέλαι, πέπονθ' ἐγώ,
 ὑμῖν ἀναθεῖς ἅπαντα τὰμὰ πράγματα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σαυτῷ σὺ τούτων αἴτιος,

1455 στρέψας σεαυτὸν εἰς πονηρὰ πράγματα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δῆτα ταῦτ' οὐ μοι τότε ἡγορεύετε,

ἀλλ' ἄνδρ' ἄγροικον καὶ γέροντ' ἐπήρατε;

CLOUDS

PHIDIPPIDES

I'll beat mother as I beat you.

STREPSIADES

What's that? What did you say? That's different, a far greater crime!

PHIDIPPIDES

And what if I use the Worse Argument to defeat you on the resolution, it's right to beat one's mother?

STREPSIADES

Just this: if you do, nothing will save you from jumping into the Pit⁹⁰ along with Socrates and the Worse Argument. Clouds, it's your fault this has happened to me! I trusted you with all my affairs.

CHORUS LEADER

No, you've only yourself to blame, since you took the twisted path that leads to evildoing.

STREPSIADES

Then why didn't you tell me that at the start, instead of leading an old bumpkin on?

⁹⁰ Where criminals were executed.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1460 ἡμεῖς ποιούμεν ταῦθ' ἐκάστοθ', ὅντιν' ἂν
γνώμεν πονηρῶν ὄντ' ἐραστὴν πραγμάτων,
ὥς ἂν αὐτὸν ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς κακόν,
ὅπως ἂν εἰδῇ τοὺς θεοὺς δεδοικέναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1465 ὦμοι, πονηρά γ', ὦ Νεφέλαι, δίκαια δέ·
οὐ γάρ με χρῆν τὰ χρήμαθ' ἀδανεισάμην
ἀποστερεῖν. νῦν οὖν ὅπως, ὦ φίλτατε,
τὸν Χαιρεφῶντα τὸν μιαρὸν καὶ Σωκράτη
ἀπολείς μετ' ἐμοῦ ἁλθών, οἱ σὲ κᾶμ' ἐξηπάτων.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἀδικήσαιμι τοὺς διδασκάλους.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ναὶ ναί, καταιδέσθητι πατρῶον Δία.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἰδοὺ γε Δία πατρῶον. ὥς ἀρχαῖος εἶ.
Ζεὺς γάρ τις ἐστίν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐστίν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1470 οὐκ ἔστ', οὐκ, ἐπεὶ
Δῖνος βασιλεύει, τὸν Δί' ἐξεληλακώς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἐξελήλακ', ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τοῦτ' ὥομην
διὰ τουτονὶ τὸν δῖνον. ὦμοι δείλαιος,

CLOUDS

CHORUS LEADER

We do the same thing every time to anyone we catch lusting for shady dealings: we plunge him into calamity until he learns respect for the gods.

STREPSIADES

Ah, Clouds, a lesson hard but just! I shouldn't have tried to get out of repaying the money I borrowed. Now, dear son, what say you come with me and help me destroy that scum Chaerephon and Socrates for cheating you and me both?

PHIDIPPIDES

But I couldn't do my teachers any harm.

STREPSIADES

Oh yes you should: to Zeus of the Fathers tender your respect!

PHIDIPPIDES

Listen to him, "Zeus of the Fathers"! How antiquated! Do you think there's a Zeus?

STREPSIADES

I do.

PHIDIPPIDES

There isn't, no, because Whirl is king, having kicked out Zeus.

STREPSIADES

He hasn't kicked him out. I thought he had, because of this Whirligig.⁹¹ What a poor sap I was to treat you, a mere

⁹¹ See 380 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ὅτε καὶ σὲ χυτρεοῦν ὄντα θεὸν ἡγήσάμην.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

1475 ἐνταῦθα σαντῶ παραφρόνει καὶ φληνάφα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἷμοι παρανοίας. ὥς ἐμαινόμεν ἄρα
ὄτ' ἐξέβαλον καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς διὰ Σωκράτη.
ἀλλ' ὦ φίλ' Ἑρμῇ, μηδαμῶς θύμαινέ μοι,
μηδέ μ' ἐπιτρίψης, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε

1480 ἐμοῦ παρανοήσαντος ἀδολεσχία.

καί μοι γενοῦ ξύμβουλος, εἴτ' αὐτοὺς γραφὴν
διωκάθω γραψάμενος, εἴθ' ὅτι σοι δοκεῖ.

ὀρθῶς παραινεῖς οὐκ ἐὼν δικορραφεῖν
ἀλλ' ὥς τάχιστ' ἐμπιμπράναι τὴν οἰκίαν

1485 τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν. δεῦρο δεῦρ', ὦ Ξανθία,
κλίμακα λαβὼν ἔξελθε καὶ σμινύην φέρων,
κᾶπειτ' ἐπαναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸ φροντιστήριον
τὸ τέγος κατάσκαπτ', εἰ φιλεῖς τὸν δεσπότην,
ἕως ἂν αὐτοῖς ἐμβάλης τὴν οἰκίαν.

1490 ἐμοὶ δὲ δᾶδ' ἐνεγκάτω τις ἡμμένην.

κἀγώ τιν' αὐτῶν τήμερον δοῦναι δίκην
ἐμοὶ ποιήσω, κεῖ σφόδρ' εἶς' ἀλαζόνες.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ Α'

ιοὺν ιού.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

σὸν ἔργον, ὦ δᾶς, ἰέναι πολλὴν φλόγα.

CLOUDS

piece of pottery, like a god!

PHIDIPPIDES

Stay here and rant and rave to yourself.

PHIDIPPIDES goes inside.

STREPSIADES

Dear me, what lunacy! I must have been insane when I rejected the gods for Socrates. Well, Hermes old friend,⁹² don't be angry with me or bring me some disaster, but forgive me for taking leave of my senses because of their idle talk. You be my counsellor: should I slap them with an indictment and pursue them in court? Or whatever you think best. (*putting his ear closer to Hermes*) That's good advice: I shouldn't cobble up lawsuits but rather burn down the idle talkers' house as quick as I can. Xanthias, come out here; bring a ladder and a hatchet with you. Now if you love your master, climb up onto the Thinkery and demolish the roof, until you bring the house down on them. Now somebody fetch me a lighted torch; I'll make someone in there pay dearly for what they've done to me, even if they *are* big-time blowhards!

Xanthias, a Slave, and STREPSIADES climb on to the roof of the Thinkery.

FIRST PUPIL

(*inside*) Help! Help!

STREPSIADES

Go on, torch, launch lots of fire!

⁹² Images of Hermes stood in the street outside houses.

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ Α΄

ἄνθρωπε, τί ποιεῖς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1495

ὅτι ποιῶ; τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ
διαλεπτολογοῦμαι ταῖς δοκοῖς τῆς οἰκίας;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ Β΄

οἶμοι· τίς ἡμῶν πυρπολεῖ τὴν οἰκίαν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐκεῖνος οὐπὲρ θοῖμάτιον εἰλήφατε.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ Β΄

ἀπολείς, ἀπολείς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

1500

τοῦτ' αὐτὸ γὰρ καὶ βούλομαι,
ἦν ἡ σμινύη μοι μὴ προδῶ τὰς ἐλπίδας
ἦ γὰρ πρότερόν πως ἐκτραχηλισθῶ πεσών.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὔτος, τί ποιεῖς ἐτεόν, οὐπὶ τοῦ τέγους;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οἶμοι τάλας δείλαιος, ἀποπνιγῆσομαι.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ Β΄

1505

ἐγὼ δὲ κακοδαίμων γε κατακαυθήσομαι.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Chaerephonti dant b

¹⁵⁰⁵ Chaerephonti dant KNΘ

CLOUDS

PUPILS rush out.

FIRST PUPIL

What are you doing, man?

STREPSIADES

What am I doing? What do you think? I'm mincing words with the rafters of your house!

SECOND PUPIL

(at a window) Me oh my, who's torching our house?

STREPSIADES

It's me, whose cloak you stole!

SECOND PUPIL

You'll kill us, kill us!

STREPSIADES

That's precisely my intention, if this hatchet doesn't betray my hopes or I fall first and break my neck!

SOCRATES rushes outside.

SOCRATES

You there, you on the roof, what do you think you're doing?

STREPSIADES

I tread the air and scrutinize the sun!

SOCRATES

Ah, poor me, I'm going to choke to death!

SECOND PUPIL

And my wretched fate is to be burned up!

SECOND PUPIL jumps to the stage as STREPSIADES and Xanthias descend from the roof.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί γὰρ μαθόντες τοὺς θεοὺς ὑβρίζετε
καὶ τῆς σελήνης ἐσκοπεῖσθε τὴν ἔδραν;
δίωκε, παῖε, βάλλε, πολλῶν οὖνεκα,
μάλιστα δ' εἰδὼς τοὺς θεοὺς ὥς ἡδίκουν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1510 ἡγείσθ' ἔξω· κεχόρευται γὰρ
μετρίως τό γε τήμερον ἡμῖν.

CLOUDS

STREPSIADES

Then what was the idea of outraging the gods and peering at the backside of the Moon? Chase them! Hit them! Stone them! They've got it coming many times over, but most of all for wronging the gods.

SOCRATES and PUPILS flee, pursued by STREPSIADES and Xanthias.

CHORUS

Lead the dancers on their way:
we've done enough performing for today.